

HSS

FRONT: RUSSELL BANKS - 12 / FILM: *DIG!* - 46 / ARTS: *PRIMORDIAL BLUES* - 48

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

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# THE VERGE

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(By HEATHER ADLER - 26)



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## ON THE COVER

Has the music industry gotten so image-conscious that it's become impossible for a band to get noticed without a slick music video backing them up? That's what local bands Sugakane, Politic Live, the Jay Murphy Band, King Ring Nancy and Tupelo Honey believe—they're all hoping that video showcase concerts like the Verge will finally get the labels looking Edmonton's way • 26

### FRONT

What rhymes with "burnt out"? the Alberta Beatnik hangs up his quill • 7



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Love is in the air—literally—in *Primordial Blues* • 48



three  
dollar  
bill

BY RICHARD BURNETT

### Alexander the Fabulous

Our greatest leaders are not allowed to be gay. Not a one. Just ask Alexander the Great, Abraham Lincoln or Yasser Arafat. Oh, they're all dead? How convenient. But convenient for who?

I have long said that Alex and Abe were faggots and in recent weeks, while I have never sucked his cock or he mine, I have dared threaten straight sensibilities by stating I believe Arafat was at least bisexual and was likely dying of AIDS.

Historians agree Alexander and his beloved Hephaistion were more than

battlemates and boyhood chums—they fucked each other, for God's sake. Still, a group of 25 Greek lawyers is threatening to sue Warner Brothers and Oliver Stone, the director of the film *Alexander* (which I saw at a press screening earlier this week), for smearing Hellenism because Stone's film portrays Alexander as bisexual.

"We are not saying that we are against gays," Yannis Varnakos told Reuters, "but we are saying that the production company should make it clear to the audience that this film is pure fiction and not a true depiction of the life of Alexander."

I think Varnakos needs to get laid.

If Alex's straight sexual relationships were portrayed in the movie by a series of longing looks (if I see one more scene with eyes brimming with tears...), hand gestures and friendly hugs, straight audiences would rightly ask, "What the fuck are you doing?" Instead, Alex practically rapes his first (arranged) wife Roxanna (played by a very naked, orgiastic Rosario Dawson) as if the filmmakers need the Great One to prove his virility. Who cares

what gay audiences think as long as straights spend their hard-earned \$12 to come and see the damn movie?

Which is why *Alexander's* release date was postponed from November 5 to November 24: Warner demanded Oliver Stone cut out all the gay sex. And Stone—the man who dared the world to pay attention with his movie *JFK*—actually gave in. This fall, MSNBC reported that a gay sex scene with the bottle-blond Colin Farrell (looking more like Mae West in a powdered wig) as Alexander and the very hot Francisco Bosch as Alexander's fuck buddy Bagoas, a Persian eunuch, was axed for being "too explicit."

"Alexander was almost certainly bisexual, and Oliver Stone wanted to portray that," a source told MSNBC. "So there are scenes between Colin and women, but there's also some passionate scenes between Colin and Francisco Bosch. Some of the suits at Warner Brothers think that the moviegoing public just isn't ready to

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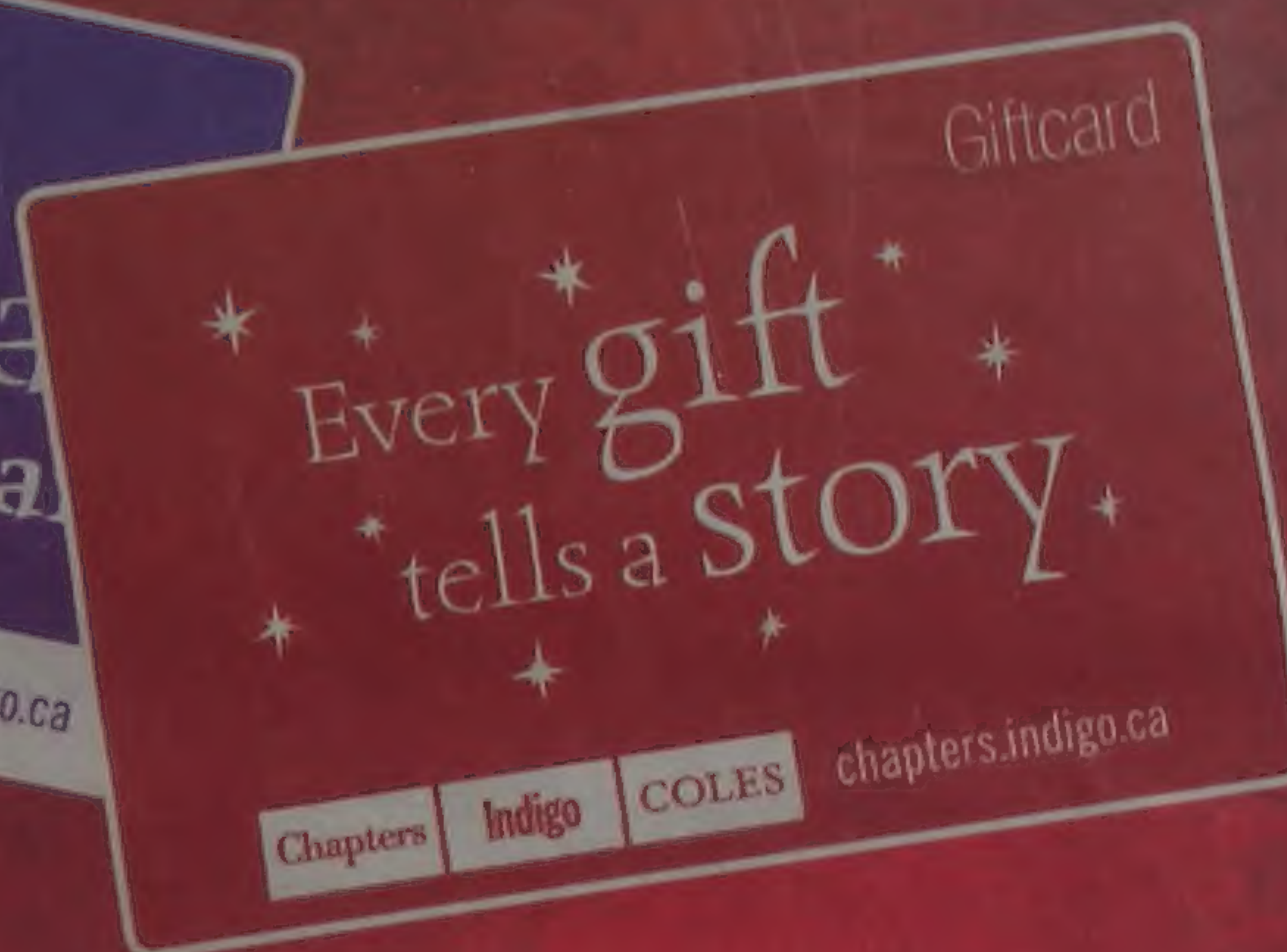
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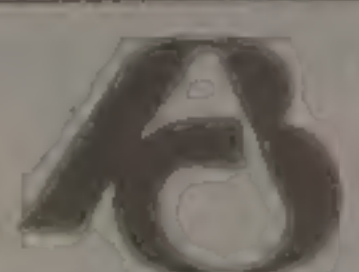
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## news roundup

BY CHRIS BOUTET

### FORETHOUGHT!

Hey, you know how everyone in Alberta is still angry about the National Energy Program and how we had to give away all "our" oil money to those jerk-ass provinces out east? Wouldn't it be funny if someday, after all the oil is gone, it turned out that Alberta needed equalization payments from some eastern province with a suddenly very lucrative hydroelectric industry? Yeah, that'd be pretty funny.

And also, apparently, somewhat plausible. According to the Canadian Press, Quebec premier Jean Charest mused aloud during his closing address at last week's Liberal Party convention in Montreal that Quebec has the potential to become as rich as Alberta by asserting itself as a major exporter of clean, reliable hydroelectric power. "Alberta got rich selling oil," Charest told the 2,400 delegates in attendance. "Why should we have any scruples about getting rich selling clean, reliable and renewable electricity to our neighbours? With greenhouse gases, with the Kyoto Protocol, with oil at \$40 a barrel in the foreseeable future... and with the energy need, what I see is a window of opportunity for us to go ahead with a development that is not only solid environmentally but good economically."

It's a great idea, sure, but at this point it may be little more than that. According to provincial energy board estimates, Quebec is currently a net importer of electricity, and will contin-

ue to be so until the end of the decade unless massive construction efforts are undertaken. Charest said that the province expects to return to a surplus position by 2009, however, once five new hydroelectric projects at the cost of \$5.4 billion are completed. Charest also added that another \$11 billion in projects are still on the table.

Well, if or when the time comes, here's hoping that there won't be too many Quebecers telling their government to let those western bastards freeze in the dark.

### ANOTHER RULING!

Man, if I had a halfpenny for every landmark decision trotted out by a Canadian high court in the last couple weeks, I'd have, like... several. I don't know, maybe three. Still, that's three more halfpennies than I know what to do with, and the judges just kept pilin' them on last Thursday, as the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously ruled that governments must consult with First Nations groups before developing land that aboriginals claim to own, even if the titles are not supported by court rulings or treaties.

In a country where more than 1,000 unsettled land claims are constantly being fought over, the decision is Canada's first attempt to establish some ground rules for the battle. According to a report from ctv.ca, however, the ruling does not extend to private industry developers, and although it states that governments are under duty to consult, they are not obligated to receive consent before using land. "Rather, the commitment is to a meaningful process of consultation," wrote Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin. "As for aboriginal claimants, they must not frustrate the Crown's reasonable good faith attempts. Nor should they take unreasonable positions to thwart governments from making decisions or acting in cases where, despite meaningful consultation, agreement is not reached."

The ruling has gotten a warm

reception from the aboriginal community, particularly in B.C., where the vast majority of land claim disputes in Canada are taking place. "These court decisions invite more negotiations and more litigation," said Edward John, grand chief of the First Nations Summit, a group that represents about 140 B.C. bands in treaty negotiations, told the Canadian Press. "The ball is in the hands of the governments now. They need to sit down, as the court says, and deal with us. They can't run roughshod over the interests of our people."

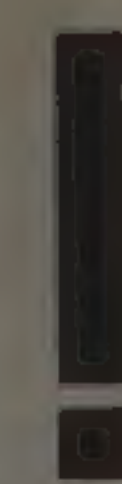
The ruling was made after the Supreme Court reviewed the results of two B.C. Court of Appeal rulings in which government and private industry lawyers argued that conferring with aboriginal groups was not a constitutional obligation before logging, mining or developing land, if claims were not yet proven.

### BACKING DOWN!

After a lengthy consideration period, officials in Strathcona County have opted to kill a controversial bylaw that would have tried to regulate local oil and gas operations for fear that the province wouldn't like it, according to a report filed by the CBC earlier this week.

The proposed bylaw, which was designed to address the numerous complaints filed by residents who felt that their health was being endangered by an industry that was no longer playing by the rules, was nonetheless discarded on Monday under the advice of lawyers who were wary of the possible repercussions screwing with the oil industry could have for the county. "Oil and gas drives this economy in this province, and when you start fiddling with that I would expect some pretty negative feedback," said newly elected mayor Cathy Olesen in an interview with CBC. "They would have every right or every ability to dissolve us as a municipality."

No indication was given as to whether Olesen thought that would be a mean thing to do if you were a province. ☹



vuepoint

BY CHRISTOPHER THRALL

### All creatures great and Mall

One definition of psychosis is the willingness to engage in the same actions over and over, expecting a different result. In light of the fact that a new group of performing aquatic mammals are now populating West Edmonton Mall's recently vacated dolphin tank, I have to wonder if the Mall is indeed psychotic.

That very tank claimed the lives of three adult dolphins and five calves; when the last dolphin, Howard, was finally shipped to Florida earlier this year, every shopper with a shred of human decency breathed a sigh of relief. But now, three huge sea lions are swimming gloomily around the same tiny tank in Howard's place. I'm no activist, but how many creatures have to die before we stop this charade?

WEM originally intended to use the tank for human performances: log-rollers, synchronized swimmers and high-divers. But the diving show has come and gone and we're back to captive beasts performing for gawking crowds. Apparently, forcing sea creatures to submit to hugs on command is a bigger draw.

And the Mall continues to refuse to learn from its controversial animal history, as 15 flamingos arrived in late September. They were supposed to be stashed in the basement until their habitat was finished, but living creatures are a cost that needs to pay off in immediate benefits, so as a result, patrons watched for weeks as these beautiful birds huddled together on a bare concrete floor in their tiny, glassed-in pen. Concrete trees have been recently installed as well as a few plants meant to simulate tropical greenery. But the textureless concrete floor remains, as do the bustling holiday crowds and kids pounding on the glass. Flamingos can live more than 40 years in captivity. Poor bastards.

In 2003, Mall owner Don Ghermezian announced WEM's intent to open a full zoo in 2005. Lions, bears, zebras and elephants will join the sea lions and flamingos to somehow enhance our shopping pleasure. Each one will be a point of contention, each death a black eye for the Mall and for our city.

WEM will only respond to financial or political pressure—so maybe we should refuse to shop there. As for political pressure, our new mayor was a principal supporter of the exotic animal ban that failed to pass city council last year: if we ask him to, he might just step out of his office and take action. Until then, I'll be writing letters to the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums; I'm interested to know why they accredited a mall in the first place. ☹



# Burnt-out poets society

Why is Mark Kozub, the Alberta Beatnik, hanging up his beret and retiring from the local poetry scene?

BY MINISTER FAUST

*I just feel  
like the walls are closing in, and I know  
those walls are really made of butter-  
flies  
and the doorknob is made of the sun  
and so are you, each one of you,  
but I've got to go anyway.*

*I've got to go because my pencil can't  
get it up anymore  
and my computer doesn't compute. —  
"GOODBYE, BEATNIKS" BY MARK KOZUB,  
A.K.A. THE ALBERTA BEATNIK*

The man with the soul-patch, the Lex Luthor coiffure, the fists full of verse and the acoustic bass as the accompanying cannon for his canon—he calls himself the Alberta Beatnik, and his role as E-Town's resident MC of performance poetry has finally beat the *nik* right out of him. A month ago, Mark Kozub walked away from seven years of hosting open-stage poetry while backing up unknowns and up-and-thrumming legends with his musical improvisation, and on December 7 his Raving Poets band will stand down, perhaps never to stand together again, leaving Whyte Avenue's Backroom Vodka Bar silenced on Tuesday nights ever more.

Weekly bouts of versified slamming and/or jamming, for all its electric thrills, aren't enough for Kozub anymore, who knows that man cannot not live on verse alone. "Poetry doesn't really sell, the last I heard," Kozub deadpans. "There's a short-term ego-high of doing performance poetry of people saying, 'Yay! Oh, that's great! Wow!'—if, in fact you performance goes well. If it goes badly, it's not an ego boost at all."

Kozub's departure has already had its emotional casualties. "Oh, God. We miss him like crazy," says Thomas Trofimuk, novelist and Raving Poets bandmate, who met Kozub during Edmonton's Stroll of Poets a decade ago; they've been co-artists and dear friends ever since. "It's been a great ride since day one and having seven people in the audience to having upwards of 100—for poetry." The exhausted Raving Poets are soon bringing their current eight-month season to an end, and hope to chart a new course in February, but Trofimuk can't on speculate form, venue, starting date or even if

they'll continue at all.

**KOZUB, WHO'S BEEN HOSTING** the poetry nights at Backroom Vodka Bar for five years—and for two years before that at Grounds for Coffee—is leaving largely because of burnout. How could he not be feeling spiritually depleted after years of MCing open-mic nights where anyone, regardless of talent, performance ability or mental health, can hold a roomful of hopefuls hostage with potentially cringe-inducing wordwork?

"I don't mean to say this," apologizes Kozub, nursing a cool coffee inside the '50s retrophilia of the Route 99 Diner, "but within the realm of performance poetry, I'm just so burnt out of having done so much of it for the last number of years, that frankly, it was getting to the point where I thought, 'I can't even bear to get up and read a poem of my own without feeling ill. Which is a really bad thing when something inside you is telling you that you shouldn't be doing this.... I just got to the point where if I heard another poem, I would maybe vomit. And it has nothing to do with the poetry. It's just a certain point I'm in where a poet reaches complete burnout.'"

Full of sympathy for journeyman poets, Kozub frequently excuses the poor work he's seen; indeed, the kind and extremely personable Alberta Beatnik only laments the bad if pushed to do so. The most excruciating aspect of Kozub's time as MC, though, was associated with what he calls "rock star syndrome." "In hindsight," he says, "it would have been nice to have intervened and said to a given poet, 'You know, inside your mind there's a big rock concert going on and you're onstage and wearing spandex pants, and there's a big rock concert going on and there are pyrotechnics behind you, and for some strange reason there's a coliseum of people worshipping you reading poetry with a band behind you. You're thinking you're a rock star... but in fact, no one gets it.' But again, I've probably been there myself. Those moments have been as painful as shaving off my hair with a cheese grater."

Suddenly reverting to his usual

gentleness, Kozub worries aloud he's been too harsh: "Am I changing my name legally to 'Captain Fathead'?... Everyone's at a different stage of writing. But I think everyone has their limit. And I've just reached mine."

**DON'T THINK THAT** Kozub is abandoning literature altogether, though; during a recent period of manic output, he's completed three novels, the

## FEATURE

most polished of which details the existential crisis of, well, *you*. "You're the main character, of course," he says of *You and Dick*, "and you work with a man named Dick, who you completely cannot stand, in an office where your day-to-day life is absolutely morose. You get a letter one day saying that, whether you know it or not, your entire life is a sham, you're just part of a comic strip, and you can be erased at any moment."

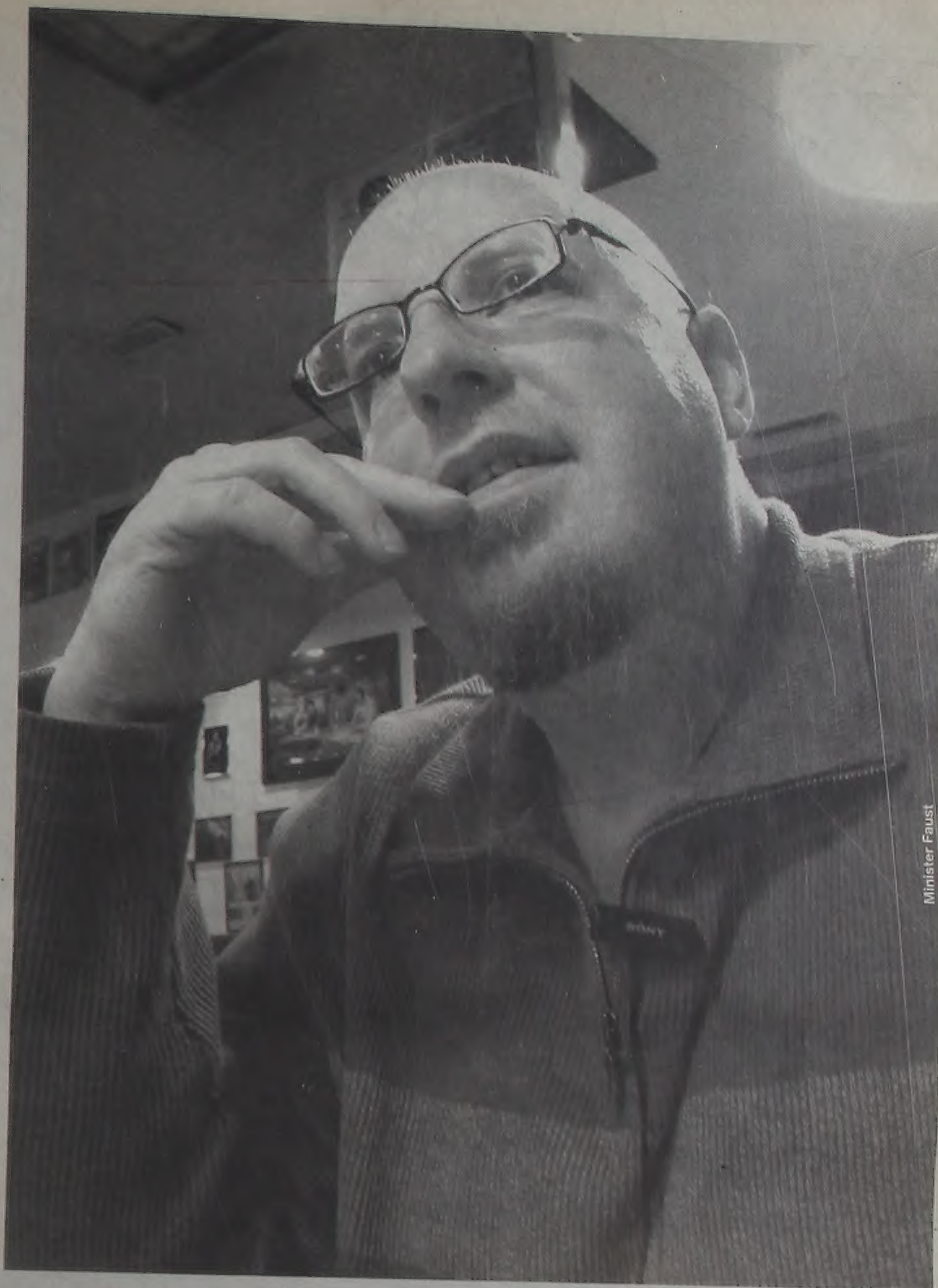
So what's Kozub's legacy, and will it endure? Because of him, hundreds of local poets have launched their work publicly; some have gone on to tour Canada and had books published. Kozub's especially proud to have hosted the first public performance of Mingus Tourette, who just released his caustic, incendiary volume *Nunt*.

And his greatest moment? "The absolute height, where poetry transcended itself and became a higher form of human communication was 'Peace Talks,'" he says, referring to a post-9/11 series at the Backroom Vodka Bar. Such gatherings brought people together, Kozub believes, out of a sense of higher purpose. "They want to share their deeper emotions, their thoughts, their feelings about issues that, particularly at that time, were pretty raw.... I was fearing that loss of sense of community, fearing that fear would become much more rampant on a basic community level, and realizing that I had to do something to change this. If you're not a

politician and just a writer, then you attempt to do that through creating a sense of community where freedom of speech can reign, because we desperately need that in this world, with a diversity of voices."

Trofimuk agrees. "Here was this safe forum to present poetry from all views—it was amazing," he says. "Mark brought incredible musical talent, incredible wackiness on the poetry side, and an astounding social conscience that will be hard to replace." Even while departing, Kozub remains devoted to others; during his final performance he donated half the profits from that night's sale of *Open*, his highly personal final CD to the Bissell Centre.

On his own future, the closing lines from "Goodbye, Beatniks" say it best: "we don't know it's day unless it's night/so I'm turning out the light and saying a prayer/of thanks for being here all these years..../may the best of our words/be tattooed forever on each other's hearts." ☺

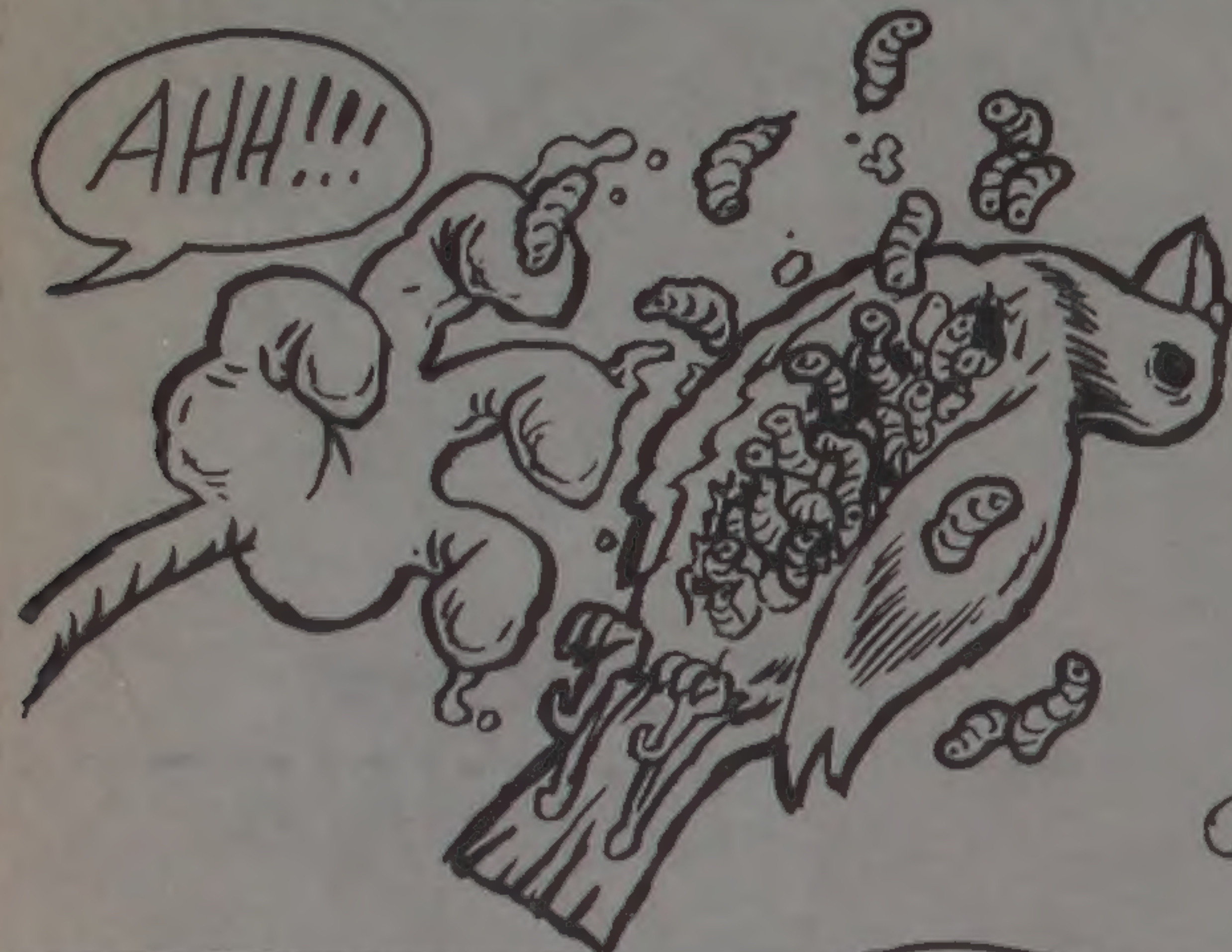


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## life after gretzky

BY CHRIS BOUTET

### Das vote

Whew! So, like, are we done with all these elections yet? Are we absolutely sure that there isn't anything else we could possibly vote on this year? Federal elections, civic elections, provincial elections.... Seriously, I've been exposed to so much damned "democracy" and "civic responsibility" over the past six months that I just makes me want to stagger all the way to Ottawa, crawl up the steps of Parliament and try to hold myself up into somewhat of an upright position just long enough to puke all over the Canadian constitution before I finally collapse on the cold marble floor and die of pure

**And is that really the role of government  
in our society? To make me bored?  
Because I can do that myself for free.**

not-wanting-to-vote-anymore-edness. Also probably of starvation, unless I remember to pack a few Lunchables for that cross-country stagger. Except not the pizza ones. They're pretty shitty.

But it's all behind us now, I suppose—the voting, that is, not the thought of pizza Lunchables—and I can't say how relieved I am that no one at any level of government in this country is going to care about what I think about things for at least another four years. Yep, we voters sure worked hard, what with all the going somewhere and choosing someone we've done, but our reward now finally lies before us, seductive and beguiling like a sexy person made out of whatever the opposite of obligation is. I don't know, nobligation?

And believe me, government sirs and lady-sirs, that's fine by me. You just keep doing what you do over there, and come grab me when you need me to fill

in another Scantron sheet, okay? Yeah, I'll just be right over here, hanging out, possibly leaning back like those Terror Squad fellows keep suggesting I do, and occasionally puking on our freedom. What? No! No, no, don't get me wrong: I love Canada! I just find maintaining its political system, you know... boring. And is that really the role of government in our society? To make me bored? Because I can do that myself for free.

I apologize if all this sounds "bitter" or "profoundly misguided," even by my own low, low standards, but surely there's some easier, less tedious way to go about choosing our public officials than by making me vote. What about a good old-fashioned pie-eating contest? Or a boat race? Or best yet, a boat-eating contest followed by a pie race... to the centre of the Earth! Now that's the kind of democracy I'm talking about, fuckos. None of this lame-ass lining up with bunch of retirees and unemployable loners in some weird-smelling school gym like some sort of sucker—just dozens of politicians eating watercraft and riding their rocket-powered pie drills through mile after mile of searing hot molten rock. I can totally see it now, but only because I'm fairly cer-

tain I'm having a really, really big stroke.

But stroke or no stroke, chances are there will be no such race, and we're stuck with pretty much the same system we have now—which, come to think of it, I'd probably find a lot more interesting if the people I liked ever won, especially in this last one. But you know, I guess that's what I get for living in Alberta and caring about things other than oil, oil money and how much I wish oil was a person so I could hug and kiss it all day and take it to the zoo and then share a malt with it at Pop's Choklit Shoppe before asking it to marry me so we can have horrible, godless children that nature couldn't possibly have seen coming.

Well, actually, I do kind of care about that last one a bit. But again: probably the stroke. Brought on by too much voting. Or something.

<ough> ☺

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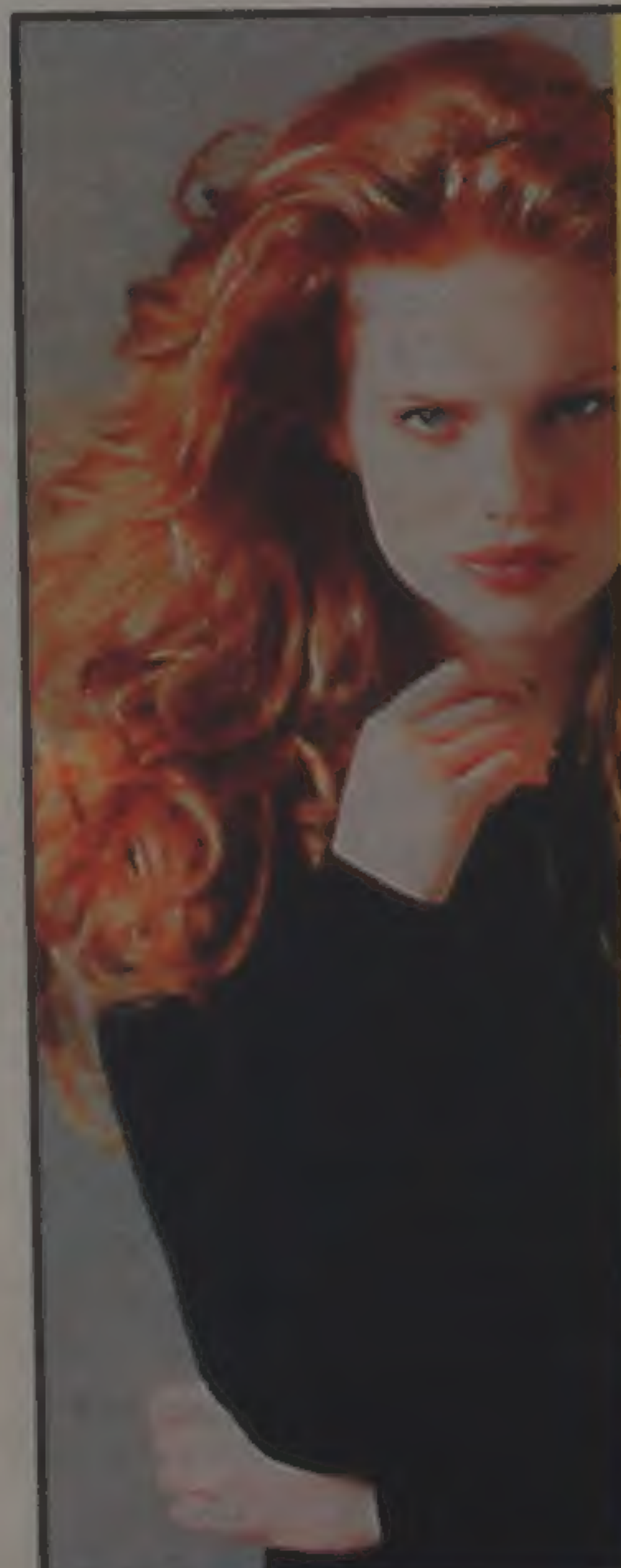
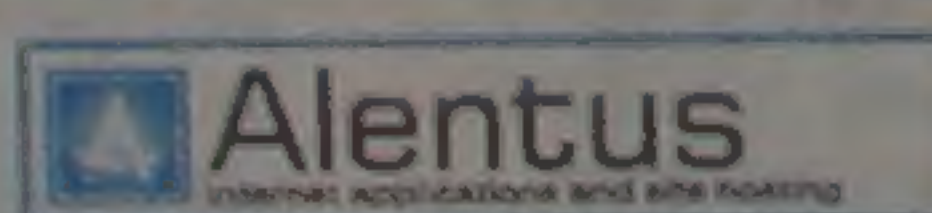


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## Three Dollar Bill

Continued from page 4.

see that. There's some pretty heated arguments going on over it."

Guess who won?

"Most certainly *bisexual*?" my friend, the Canadian author and comedian Skidmore, wrote me in an e-mail from her new home in Bali. "Is this what has you so upset, dear? Alexander was an absolute fag who may from time to time have held his nose and fucked for progeny, but 'bisexual'? That's like saying eating fish on Friday makes you Catholic."

Centuries after Alexander was het-

Then there's Arafat. Lt.-Gen. Ion Pacepa, the deputy chief of Romania's intelligence service under Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, wrote in his 1987 memoirs *Red Horizons* that KGB general Constantin Munteanu was assigned to teach Arafat and the PLO techniques to antagonize the West. "At this very moment, the Fedayee, [Arafat's codename] is in his bedroom making love to his bodyguard," Munteanu wrote in one report. "The one I knew was his latest lover. He's playing tiger again. The officer monitoring his microphones connected me live with the bedroom, and the squawling almost broke my eardrums. Arafat was roaring like a tiger, and his lover yelping like a

### I believe Arafat was at least bisexual and was likely dying of AIDS

erosexualized for the masses, the same thing happened to the greatest president of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, who only slept in the same bed with his beloved "friend" Joshua Speed for four years.

But you'd think you were committing treason for stating the obvious, judging by the immense backlash against the soon-to-be-published book *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln* by the late Dr. C.A. Tripp (who had worked closely with sexologist Alfred Kinsey and who died two weeks after completing his book). Using Kinsey's famous scale ranking homosexuality on a scale from 0 to 6, Tripp wrote, "By this measure Lincoln qualifies as a classical 5—predominately homosexual, but incidentally heterosexual."

hyena.... I've never before seen so much cleverness, blood and filth all together in one man." Munteanu's claims have a ring of truth despite the motivations of Arafat's detractors.

Which brings me back to Alexander the Great. He, along with Lincoln and Arafat, can never be gay because straight folks will not accept a gay leader. Because if they do, what does that say about them? "I'd prefer to lift weights for 20 minutes than kiss a guy for two seconds," Colin Farrell told *GQ* about playing gay onscreen, adding, "I don't like kissing boys. When you feel his stubble against your lip, it's repulsive to me, as repulsive to me as for a lot of gay men the idea of putting their tongue near a pussy is."

Methinks Colin is the biggest pussy of all. ☺



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# The Ave and the have-nots

Jeff Gusdal helps organize a community approach to Whyte's homeless problem

BY CHRIS BOUTET

When it comes to being an active member of a community, you'd be hard-pressed to find someone more involved in his area than Old Strathcona resident Jeff Gusdal. Gusdal, who lives just a few blocks off the bustling Whyte Ave strip, works as a family physician at the Justik Clinic just by the Chapters outlet—he even belongs to the Trinity Lutheran church down on 81 Ave and 100 Street. And as one would expect for someone who spends so much time in and around the Ave, Gusdal is no stranger to the homelessness issue that has been the source of so much debate in the area. But unlike so many other Strathconians who seem content to sit around and grouse about the situation, Gusdal decided to do something to help solve the problem.

"I guess it was about two and a half years ago now, in the winter of 2002," Gusdal says. "There was a homeless count done in the city which showed a significant increase in the number of homeless people in the city relative to the previous count. So a couple of churches in the area opened up their doors for these people who didn't have a place to stay. But when the program was brought back last year, there was a perception in the community that these shelters would increase the number of people in the community without homes, which a lot of residents thought was not a good thing.

"So in an attempt to look at some

more long-term solutions," he continues, "the board that operated these shelters decided to convene a public meeting to see if anything further could be done. I wasn't a member of the board; I was there just because I was interested in the issue, and at one of these meetings, they asked if there was anyone out there who would consider doing something to try and organize some discussion about how the community could deal with things in a little bit

more comprehensive manner, and so I kind of foolishly put up my hand."

Foolish or not, Gusdal's hand-putting eventually led to his starting an e-mail dialogue among people on both sides of the issue in order to compile a list of perceived impacts that homelessness was having on the community. Though participation in the discussion was limited at first, the project eventually piqued the interest of the City of Edmonton, who offered to facilitate a broader community discussion to try and identify concerns and solutions surrounding the homelessness issue. Today, three public meetings later, Gusdal et al. have emerged with a prioritized list of issues and recommendations as to how the community can address them.

OF THE SEVEN MOST PRESSING issues his group identified, Gusdal explains, the biggest one by far was the lack of attention paid to the prob-

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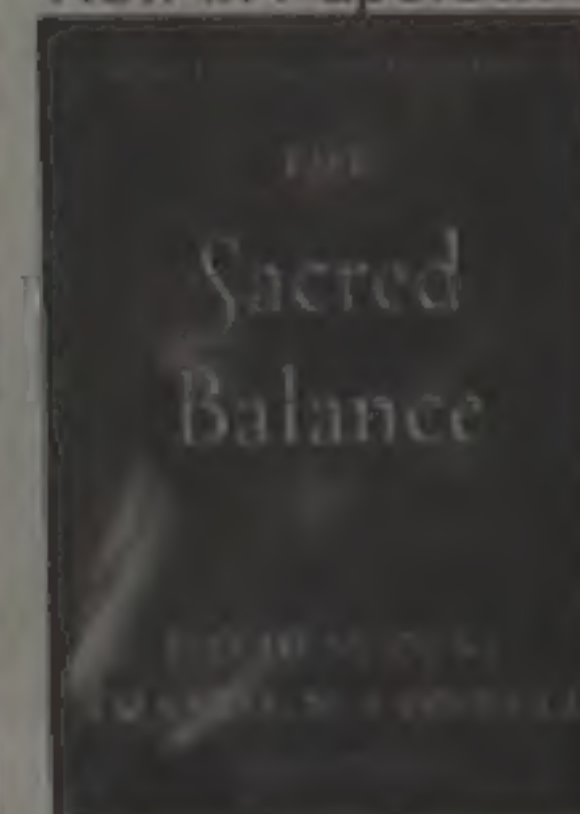
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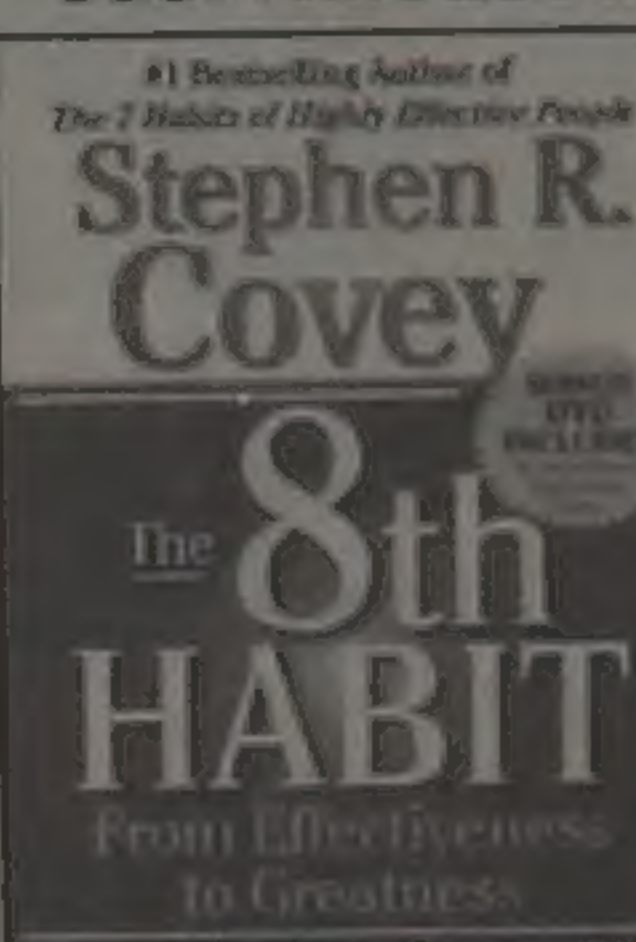
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of homelessness by all three levels of government. "This is not just an Old Strathcona community problem," he explains. "It's a problem for the city of Edmonton, for the province of Alberta, and it's a problem for the country. But because of the nature of the problem, some communities are impacted disproportionately. For example, Old Strathcona and downtown are where most of the people without homes will congregate just by the nature of the areas, and so what happens is that a nationwide problem becomes concentrated in certain pockets of urban metropolitan areas. So one of the priorities was to try and put together a coordinated lobby effort to get the three levels of government to take this issue seriously and put in some more money."

Another major priority, according to the group's findings, is the issue of fear. "There are a lot of people," Gusdal says, "who, when they see people walking through the back alley who look like they might be a little dirty, they might be intoxicated, they might be looking through the garbage and approaching people for money, it creates a strong feeling of insecurity. So we needed a plan to deal with that. Some people think we should focus on law enforcement, to increase police presence, which is one way to go about it. But another way of reducing fear would be to try and educate people as to the real risks and relative risks of homelessness in a community, because there's

a perception that if you have people out on the streets and in your back alley that there's going to be an increase of crime. But if you show people that this is rarely the case, that might be a better way to deal with it. Also, there's a group of people out there who feel that the best way to deal with the fear is to help reduce the problem itself; if there are fewer visible homeless people on the

**[Homelessness] is not just an Old Strathcona community problem.**

**"It's a problem for the city of Edmonton, for the province of Alberta, and it's a problem for the country"**

streets, then that would decrease the amount of fear.

"But another point that was brought up on Tuesday," he continues, "is that a lot of the angst and the fear that people are feeling in the community also comes from the fact that this is a very popular night spot. A lot of the incidents that occur aren't necessarily related to people without homes, but to the rowdies who spill out of the bars at two in the morning and wander to their cars and cause damage; it's very hard for people to differentiate between the two."

**GUSDAL SAYS** the process has been a very positive experience, but identifying problems is only half the battle; carrying out the group's proposed solutions is another task altogether, and it's one he hopes the community

will get behind. "What the process has been left with is that the people involved up to this point, we've really tried to encourage them to take ownership of these issues," he says. "There have been people involved in the working groups over the last few meetings who are now contact people to keep these initiatives going. There are people who are looking into lobbying efforts, there are people who have said they will be meeting with police to outline a method of dealing with that fear; that's really where it's been left at. These three meetings have produced some action plans, and now it's up to volunteer citizens in this community to try and get some concrete action going and ensure that the process continues."

"For me, it's been a very positive experience," he concludes. "I think that there's a perception out there that everyone is absorbed in their own self-interest—yes, some people have said that they're fearful and angry and scared to go into their back alley at night, but they recognize that this problem can't be dealt with just by bashing these people on the head and putting them in jail; you have to do something positive. And I know now that there is a real drive in this community to deal with this issue the right way, and I've been really impressed by that." ☐

For more information or to obtain a transcript of the meetings, contact Jeff Gusdal at [hanaejef@compusmart.ab.ca](mailto:hanaejef@compusmart.ab.ca).



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# This Darling man

Bush victory prompts author Russell Banks to ponder Canadian citizenship

BY WAYNE ARTHURSON

Russell Banks was hoping for two miracles in one year, but like a character out of one in his novels, he knew the world would only be so kind to him. Banks, the author of novels such as *Affliction*, *Continental Drift* and *The Sweet Hereafter*, celebrated his first miracle this fall when the Boston Red Sox won their first World Series in 86 years.

"I can't tell you how happy I am that the Red Sox won; I can only be happier if Kerry wins," he told me in an interview that occurred a day before the U.S. presidential election. In his many opinion pieces and articles published in a wide variety of mostly non-American newspapers, Banks has been extremely vocal in his criticism of George W. and the policies of the U.S. government. "I'm very bleak about his chances and my wife said, 'You were bleak about the Red Sox and look what happened there.' But I'll be very surprised if he wins. And even so, he isn't going to be able to... I really don't think he

really wants to radically change the direction of American politics and culture in the way it's evolved over the past 25 years and in an accelerated pace of the past four years. Whatever is true today will be true next month about American political life and culture."

Things are so bad in the U.S., Banks is talks about uprooting himself from his home in upstate New York and joining the exodus of disgruntled Americans to Cana-

## PROFILE BOOKS

da. Since Banks's father was a Canadian who moved to the U.S. during the Depression, he's only a few forms away from becoming a Canadian citizen. Of course, Banks's Canadian publisher is encouraging him in that direction, since as a Canadian citizen he'd suddenly be in the running for the Governor-General's Award, the Giller Prize and, most prestigious of all, the Man Booker Prize.

"It would be nice, but then I'd end up pissing off Canadian and American writers," he adds with a laugh. "[The idea of becoming



Canadian] is not a big stretch since I've lived most of my adult life near the border and I'm back and forth all the time, and I'm especially fond of Montreal, so yeah, I am thinking about it. Partly I don't want to grow old in that country, feeling angry and frustrated and alienated. And that's a hard thing to feel; it doesn't feel like my home. I'd still keep on foot in America but it's about where I want to make my emotional and intellectual base. Up to now it's been in the U.S. of A., but now I feel so alienated. We're in a terrible mess, no question about that, and I don't see how that can be reversed in a decade or maybe in another generation. All I hope is that we can avoid a terrible disaster. I haven't been this depressed about America political life and culture in my life. We're sliding very quickly towards a fascist plutocracy. And these things do

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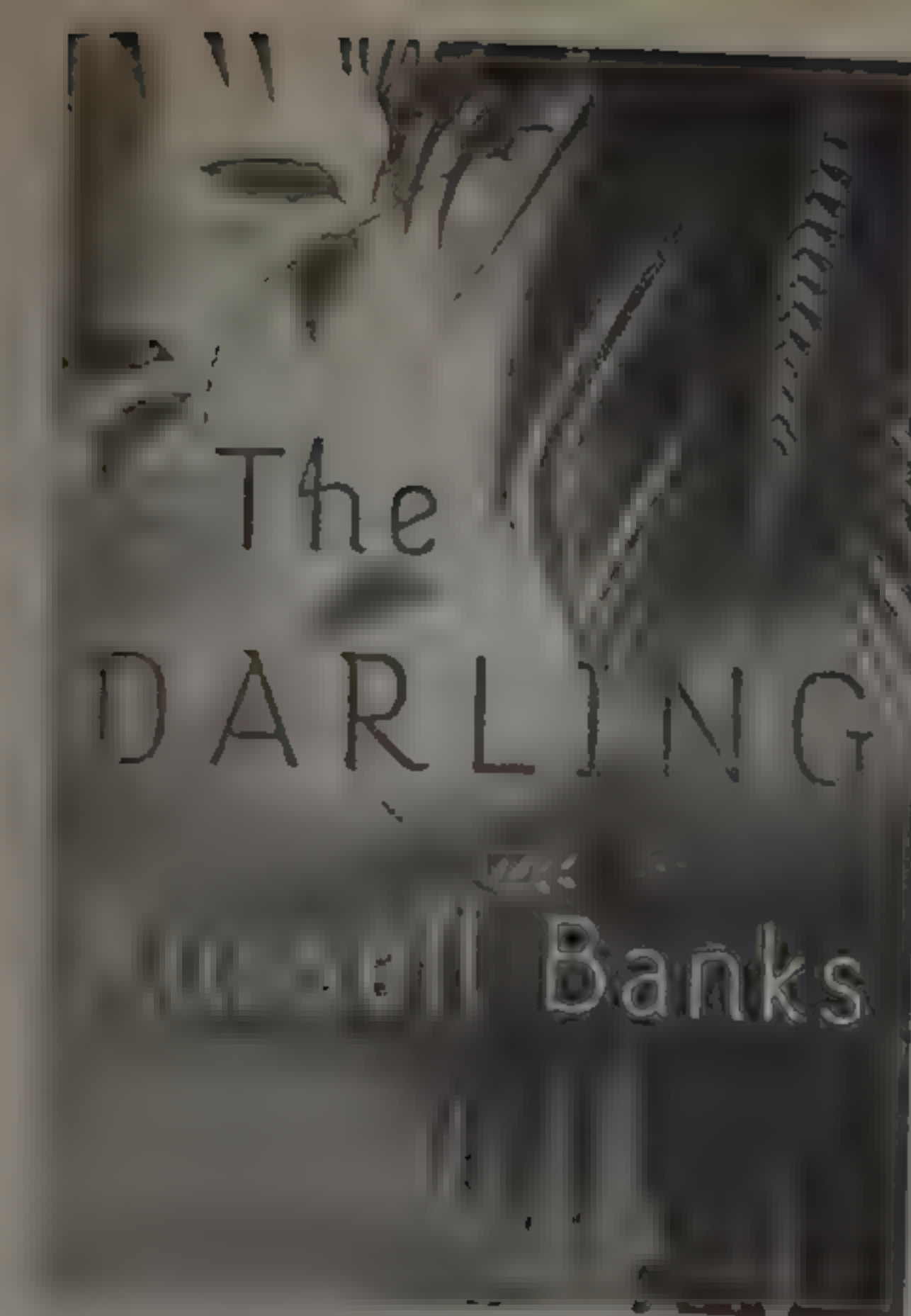
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happen in history—one form of government does become another.”

IT'S A SAD COMMENT on the U.S. if one of its best writers decides to jump ship, but then again, it won't be such

a big jump for Banks's work. His quietly-paced, character-driven novels, with their strong connection to geography and their subtle commentaries on politics, race and culture, always have had a “Canadian” feel to them. His new book, *The Darling*, is similar in tone, except this time out the main setting is not working-class America, but Africa.

Set in Liberia and the United States from the 1960s to 1991, *The Darling* tells the story of Hannah Musgrave, who rejects her upper-middle-class upbringing when she joins the radical Weather Underground activist group. Eventually she is forced to flee to Africa; while there, weary of her radical past, she marries a government official and becomes acquainted with Charles Taylor, the notorious warlord and now ex-president of Liberia. Through her relationship with Taylor, she triggers a series of events that forces her to make a heartbreaking decision.

The book isn't one of Banks's best novels; most of the characters, save

Hannah, are too flat to generate any sympathy, and while Hannah's voice is the most powerful element of the book, her motivations for joining a radical underground group are too vague. Still, Banks makes an interesting connection between Liberia, a state established in the 1800s for freed slaves and the attitude of the '60s generation. Hannah's (and Banks's) '60s experiences are far from the flower child stereotype perpetuated by most fictional treatments of that complicated decade.

“Liberia's story is the story of good intentions gone bad,” Banks says, “and Hannah's story is certainly that. In some ways, it's the story of my entire generation, the story of unintended consequences. I experienced it not as it was portrayed, as a self-indulgent, even decadent generation but in many ways puritanical in a classic American way: rigid, disciplined and hard-working. And there are positive and negative aspects of those qualities. And that was what I was trying to get at with Hannah,

because there is much about Hannah and that whole generation that I admire, because I'm a part of that generation. And there was a lot of seriousness that ended up in hindsight looking self-important and deluded. But it was based on a belief that we could change the world—and from a civil rights point of view, we did.”

THE DARLING

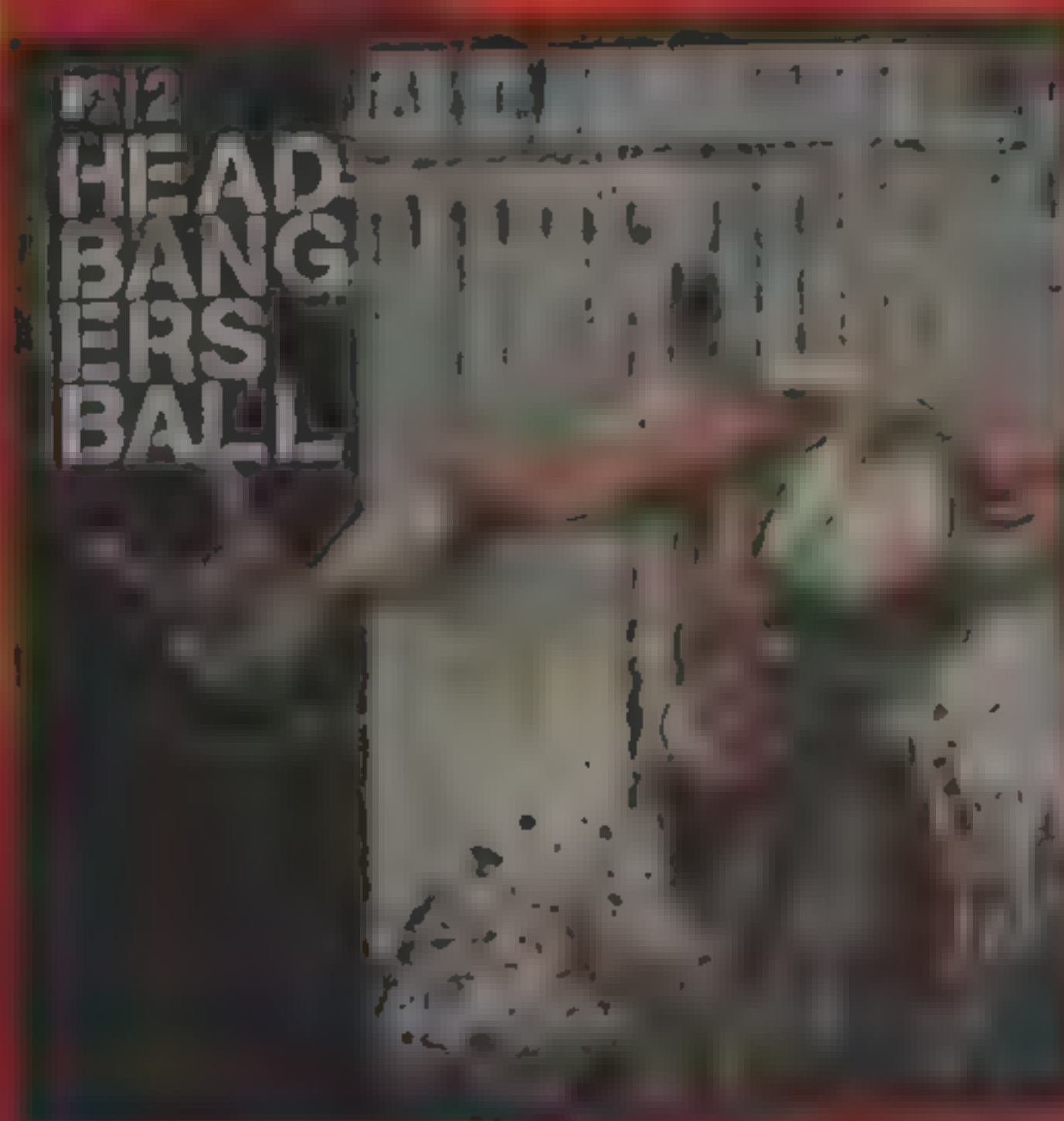
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## Bezmozgis and *Natasha*

Short story collection is well-observed, but doesn't justify industry hype

BY BRIAN GIBSON

The story of author David Bezmozgis seems even more miraculous than any of the seven that comprise *Natasha and Other Stories*. For a previously unheard-of writer to publish one of his pieces in *The New Yorker*, that weekly bastion of the literati, is one lucky break, but to have other stories appear in *Zoetrope* and *Harper's* (rounding it off with stories in domestic publications *Prairie Fire* and *The Walrus*) is enough to make any aspiring author retch in disgust and envy.

Of course, Bezmozgis had a crucial connection—the wannabe filmmaker got his break through acclaimed (and recently deceased) writer Leonard Michaels, whom he met while in L.A.—but this hasn't made his debut collection, in the cutthroat market of corporate publishing, any less of a hyped-up, hard-covered entry onto bookshelves.

From the first line of the opening story ("Goldfinch was flapping clotheslines, a tenement delirious with striving") Bezmozgis's focus is crystal-clear. This is a book about Roman, Bella and Mark Abramovich (who later anglicize their name to "Berman"), recent immigrants struggling to find their way in the new world, specifically the Russian-Jewish diaspora clustered around Bathurst and Finch Streets in the former Toronto suburb of North York. (Like Mark, Bezmozgis immigrated from Riga to the Ontario capital in 1980.)

Bezmozgis's style is deceptively straightforward, and it suits Mark, his young narrator—the plain prose evokes a boy's clear-cut perceptions and poignant insights into a new home he often understands better than

his parents. In "Tapka," for instance, Mark's schoolyard English education quickly covers "shithead," "gaylord" and "mental case." But this knowledge, combined with a growing confidence, morphs into guilt and disaster when Tapka, the neighbours' Lhasa Apso, becomes both symbol and victim of Mark's careless abuse of the power he's

### REVUE BOOKS

gained in his newfound home.

The moving ending of "Tapka" turns on the double-edged meanings in Bezmozgis's seemingly simple sentences, his ability to make a phrase like "Everything we have now is new" illuminate all that came before it with a sudden clarity. The conclusion of "Roman Berman, Massage Therapist," cuts to the bone with a similar swiftness—the "fully detached house" of Dr. Kornblum, a local benefactor of Russian Jews, takes on a different

## NATASHA

David Bezmozgis

slant after Roman and Bella, with Mark in tow, have competed with another pleading immigrant family for support from the easily removed, complacently bourgeois doctor.

**THERE ARE FUNNY MOMENTS** in *Natasha*, as when the family waits eagerly for the massage therapist father's prospective clients to start call-

ing: "The phone existed like a new thing.... It was either with us or against us.... [My mother] listened as friends called, other friends called, my aunt called and called. Everybody called to see whether anybody had called." "The Second Strongest Man" mingles a weightlifting competition with black-market dentistry, offering a tragicomic look at the stark difference between Brezhnev's Russia and 1980s Canada.

The title story offers an unsettling portrait of Mark's suburban adolescence, a time of hash-smoking and other forms of self-abuse. When his new, far-too-old-for-her-years cousin Natasha uses sex for money and rebellion, Mark realizes the pathetic emptiness of his teenage world. It's a bleakly affecting story, but there is something a little too offhanded about Bezmozgis's use of Natasha. The last two stories in the collection suffer from a lack of direction, veering off into subplots that don't dovetail or sputtering into a flat ending.

*Natasha's* stories are about shattered illusions, compromises, misunderstood values and the ineradicable differences between want-to-have immigrants and creature-comforted Canadians. This book can't live up to the book industry's hype, and the writer's style is not yet distinctive, but Bezmozgis remains a concise and cogent documenter of stories. He offers unflinching glimpses into a pseudo-biographical family searching for their identity in a strange land. The effect is almost coldly cinematic, an impression augmented by clipped dialogue that is paraphrased or rendered with script-like dashes instead of quotation marks. Like his title character, Bezmozgis's writing has an air of "benign detachment," and his best stories delve into a world of immigrants "delirious with striving" and bring it achingly alive. **D**

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By David Bezmozgis • Harper Flamingo  
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## infinite lives

By DARREN ZENKO

### Brat Santa

Toronto's Santa Claus parade rolled on its cheerfully tacky way down Bloor Street, a pageant of bagpipers, fife-'n'-drum units, waving maidens riding a giant swan, a rappin' Ronald McDonald already shout-ed hoarse and sounding like he'd been up all night drinking Big Mickeys and McSmoking himself stupid, Blinky the anthropomorphic cop car... the usual stuff. In the beautiful weather, the street was packed with spectating families having a Traditional Day Out—rosy-cheeked kids, Tim Hortons hot chocolate; everybody loves a parade. I permitted myself to get sentimental. Aww. But then...

The kid was somewhere between five and seven—hard to tell under all those layers of Mom-mandated "you'll catch your death" thermal swaddling—and he had his Leafs-toqued head down hard over his special-edition SpongeBob SquarePants GBA, the schoolyard equivalent of the Eddie Bauer Edition [name of SUV]. For research purposes I make a habit of looking over kids' shoulders when they're playing Game Boy—in this case, the game matched the bright yellow case—so I lingered long enough to overhear a disturbing exchange. The kid was so deep in game-synch state a trained gamer could feel his hypnotically harmonized brainwaves from five feet back... but Santa Claus himself was approaching and a zoned-out post-toddler, dead to all worlds save the pixelated undersea wonderland two inches from his face, didn't quite fit with Mom's Rockwell vision of how the outing should run.

"Honey," she wheedled hopefully, "Santa's on the way!"

No response from the pint-sized interactive entertainment consumer in his puffy Gore-tex immersion pod. Did-

n't hear? Didn't choose to hear? My money's on B; even for a synched-up, in-the-zone idiot, the Voice of Mom is a priority signal that broadcasts on all frequencies. Mom, deluding herself in favor of option A, leaned in closer and tried the direct approach.

"Pause your game, sweetheart," she cooed, showing some savvy; she'd learned that a blunt "Turn your game off" closes all diplomatic doors. "Santa's almost here!"

The eternal refrain of all seven-year-olds of all human history: "Just a second, Mom!"

Mom Central Command gives the greenlight to drop the nuke.

"Josh, if you don't pause your game and pay attention to Santa, he might get mad and decide not to come to our house this year."

Now, gamers are a superstitious bunch ("Blow on the cartridge!" "Lick the disc!" "I think the girl at EB likes me!"), and little boys are even more so; a little-boy gamer, then, is a demon-haunted mess of charms, hexes and prophylactics against catastrophe. Josh was maybe a little too old to *really* believe in Santa, and maybe he knew another second of SpongeBob would really flip Mom's switch. Either way, he hedged his bets and violently thumbed the START button to pause his game. With that theatrically exasperated sigh only little shits can produce, Josh looked up and glared at Santa as he ho-ho-hoed his way past. I couldn't see the kid's face, but from the laser-lock swivel of his head I knew he was sending a focused beam of pure "Hurry up, old man" directly at Saint Nick; if I'd been up on that float, I'd've been creeped right out. As soon as Santa had passed Josh's head flicked back down, and with a twitch of his thumb—which had never left the START button—he was back in a magical world of formulaic franchised adventure.

It's not like I'm a stranger to this sort of behaviour. I guess I was a precocious kid, and all I ever really wanted to do was bury myself in a book no matter what else was going on. My Mom practically had to pry *Taran Wanderer* out of my hands to get me to look at the Grand Canyon\*\*. But I don't think I'm going out on too rickety a limb when I say there's a big difference between former

assistant pig-keeper Taran learning what it is to be a man as he bums around the Free Commots and SpongeBob jumping over reefs and grabbing seashells or whatever the fuck it is he does.

Am I "past it"? Am I "out of touch"? Portable handheld gaming is the next big battleground, and though the approaches are varied—Nokia's N-Gage offers worldwide online multiplayer gaming; the Nintendo DS offers a touch screen and local wireless multiplayer; the PlayStation Portable's proprietary UMD disc format and cinema-aspect screen

combine to offer handheld playback of feature-length movies—the basic contention of the marketing hype, the message transmitted to people in their prime reading years, is the same: *every minute not spent looking at a glowing screen is a minute of utmost tedium*. I can't get behind that. Does that mean I can't get behind the whole industry?

Well... maybe. I mean, I don't know. Could be. We'll see. All I wanted to do here was tell a funny story about a kid who cared more about his GameBoy than he cared about Santa; I wasn't

expecting to sit here wide-eyed wondering if my life is a lie. Weird. Welp, that's the power of the written word for ya! ☺

\* I also look into apartment windows. To the guy on 85th Ave near the old railroad station: you suck at Tony Hawk. For your own sake, close your blinds.

\*\* She promptly regretted it; the first chance I got, I was over the guardrail and out on a boulder, looking down into the abyss. There are probably 200 tourist snapshots of me in various albums around Japan.

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## Harm Reduction: A Primer

**H**IV Edmonton promotes and works with harm reduction principles. Why? We believe that helping people reduce the harms associated with 'risky behaviors' acts to lessen their potential risks; it empowers individuals to understand and believe their small actions can make a difference and is often the first step towards a healthier lifestyle. When you think about it, all of us engage in harm reduction activities every day. In fact, harm reduction, in some cases, is already legislated. For example, the use of seat belts minimizes the risk of inevitable traffic accidents, and responses to drinking and driving, such as the development of "safe grads" and Keys Please are other examples of harm reduction we all understand and support.

Harm reduction recognizes that there will always be a percentage of the population who engage in higher risk behaviour, misuse alcohol and drugs, or have more than one sex partner. Harm reduction focuses on reducing or minimizing the harm associated with these behaviours. Harm reduction focuses on reducing the adverse health, social and economic consequences. Distribution of condoms to sexually active youth prevents the spread of sexual transmitted diseases, such as gonorrhea and HIV. Needle exchange programs that provide clean needles to steroid users acts in the same way - to prevent the transmission of a disease from one person to another.

HIV Edmonton recently produced a harm reduction video for youth using crystal meth. The youth outlined a number of harm reduction strategies to limit their risks. They said: "always take drugs

when you are with someone, never alone; drink lots and lots of water; use a condom always but especially when you are using drugs" because you are more likely to engage in riskier behavior; "don't operate a vehicle; and finally take breaks to give your body time to recover". All the youth who participated in the development of this video and public service announcement subsequently entered or attempted to enter treatment. Now that is harm reduction in action.

The basic tenets of harm reduction are:

- Recognizes and acknowledges the value and dignity of all individuals.

- Works to maximize the social and health assistance and minimize repressive and punitive measures. At HIV Edmonton we believe punitive measures further alienates and drives underground already isolated individuals, making prevention and harm reduction programming harder to deliver.

- Does not judge licit and illicit drugs and drug use as good or bad - after all most of us need our morning fix of coffee to make the day happen happily. Harm reduction looks at people's relationship to drugs, emphasizing the reduction of drug-related harm and the encouragement of safer drug using.

- Values the competency of people who use drugs to make choices and change their lives. Just like other individuals people who use drugs, do so for a reason. A recent study of injection drug

users (IDUs) across Canada indicated that 58% of Edmonton's IDUs had mental health problems. Many of these individuals use street drugs, over which they have more control than prescribed drugs and whose side effects they do not like. The decisions to use illicit street drugs in that context make sense to them.

- Expects accessible, flexible and non-judgmental drug treatment programs. AADAC has incorporated harm reduction into their programming. Unfortunately, the shift of thinking required for full implementation of harm reduction is still in process. Similarly, we are working with Alberta Corrections to strengthen their harm reduction activities.

Expanding harm reduction programming is a critical need in our community. While the Streetworks program provides a needle exchange program, it concentrates its programming in the urban core. More resources are needed to deliver this programming to other areas of the city. As well, other programs (such as...) are also needed. Treatment remains woefully inadequate. Treatment for crystal meth use amongst youth is particularly ineffective, or absent altogether. Vancouver's safe injection site has demonstrated the potential for cities to effectively address drug use in the urban core. It is time we explored this option for Edmonton.

Harm reduction works. Harm reduction-programming needs your support.

For more information about harm reduction visit [www.hivedmonton.com](http://www.hivedmonton.com) and click on harm reduction.

## At the End of the Rainbow

**H**uman rights have come a long way in Canada. Same sex marriage is no longer a dream in seven provinces and one territory. Legislated discrimination as a principle is almost a thing of the past for the GLBTQ community. The Provincial governments affected are not even challenging court decisions on same-sex marriage for example. Unfortunately, it doesn't ring true in Alberta's reality. The Tory government has stated repeatedly before and during the election that they would employ any means at their disposal to protect the "sanctity" of marriage between a man and a woman.

Discrimination is still a life experience for large segments of the GLBTQ population, ask the youth, the men and women who are verbally and physically abused, ask anyone who has been kicked out or ostracized because of who they are. Discrimination remains a very real player in the ongoing HIV infections in the gay/bisexual/men who have sex with men (MSM) population. AIDS is still considered a "gay" disease.

As though addressing this very issue, Stockwell Day of the Conservative Party of Canada was reported in the November 23rd Edmonton Journal as implying in an email to his caucus colleagues that he didn't offer condolences at the passing of the late Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat because it was speculated that Arafat died of AIDS related illnesses and that he was a "closeted" homosexual. Now, how is that for discrimination? As long as this attitude prevails we will never be able to eradicate HIV/AIDS in Canadian communities or anywhere else in the world.

communities or anywhere else in the world.

Homophobia and discrimination against the GLBTQ community exists throughout the world in varying degrees. Human Rights Watch researcher Rebecca Schleifer, citing her report out of Jamaica entitled "Hated to Death: Homophobia, Violence and Jamaica's HIV/AIDS Epidemic" states that gays and lesbians in Jamaica are subjected to rampant violent acts and even death. HIV peer educators are being arrested for distributing information on safer sex and condoms to gay men who are, in turn subject to extortion by police for simply carrying condoms. "Until Jamaica addresses the epidemic of homophobic violence, it will have no hope against the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. If the Jamaican government is serious about fighting the country's AIDS epidemic, it should stop promoting brutality against gay men and lesbians and start protecting them from abuse." Rebecca Schleifer, researcher with Human Rights Watch's HIV/AIDS Program.

At the Rainbow Health 2004 Improving Access to Care in Ottawa, November 4 - 7, 2004, the focus was on primary health and improving access to health care and social services for the whole GLBTQ family. There was also an undercurrent of wellness that seemed almost like the thread running through the future. Wellness, the absence of illness and the absence of discrimination also form the foundation of HIV education and prevention; wellness is also the key to living with HIV. And wellness won't be fully achieved until the stigma and discrimination stops.

## Social Construction of a Virus

**I**n order to truly and effectively meet the challenges of HIV/AIDS, in areas of prevention and support we must acknowledge and understand the realities of stigma and discrimination - myths, prejudice, beliefs, public discourse, and the constructions of morality and reality and their relationship to this disease. HIV, a virus that devastates an individual's immune system, is impacted, given meaning and power by centuries of constructed reality, ancient human fears and insecurities; it embodies and feeds on a circular interplay of devaluation of an individual or group's attributes and way of being in the world; it is fed and informed by power and domination, reinforced by social inequality deeply ingrained within societal structures, norms and values, resulting and contributing to discrimination based on a false set of perceived attributes and qualities.

Stigma of moral character is linked to the age old stigmas of erotophobia, racism, sexism, poverty, drugs, definitions of immorality and death itself. Probably the most encountered belief of HIV/AIDS is its ability to conjure up images of homosexual sex, prostitution, promiscuity, drug abuse and incorrect notions of self-inflicted poverty. Rooted and bound to multiple stigma; HIV/AIDS is continually bound to stigmatized groups; it is sexually transmitted and in a majority of cases remains terminal. It is defined by the individualization of responsibility for putting one self at risk for the illness via engagement in certain behaviors and lifestyle. Therefore positions of objectivity are eliminated and morality and theological positions via reference to sin, evil and moral irresponsibility

are highlighted. It is with no surprise therefore that HIV/AIDS, at risk groups/individuals are viewed and managed not with compassion but by segregation, discrimination and exclusion. HIV/AIDS is a condition constructed utilizing intense devaluation, discredability, dishonor and degradation.

As HIV/AIDS made its debut on to the North American Continent it originally and eagerly was linked to the GLBT communities, and then to other stigmatized groups such as Haitians setting into motion the blaming of African-Americans and other groups feeding directly into the deep roots of racism, and other related stigmas. At risk groups in Edmonton, aboriginals, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered individuals, IV drug users, women, the homeless, etc...in many cases are overwhelmed by possessing attributes that lead to experiences of multiple stigmatization and therefore multiplicities of discrimination in areas of employment, access to health, income assistance, the right to personal safety and housing.

Stigma and discrimination, in large part, continues to fuel the HIV/AIDS epidemic by sustaining silence and denial, seeding and contributing to the internalization of shame and blame, and reinforcing the marginalization of those groups at particular risk for HIV/AIDS. Until we as a society truly acknowledge the profound impact of our beliefs and actions on various groups and individuals our ability to come to terms and respond to HIV/AIDS will continue to be hampered and human beings will continue to die.

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## Women and stigma

Taken from HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination  
at <http://www.avert.org/aidsstigma.htm>

Edited by Jenni Fredriksson and Annabel Kanabus

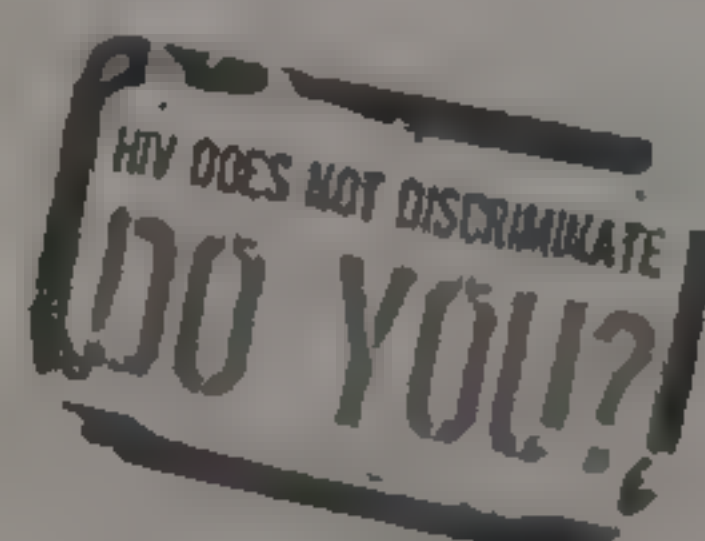
The impact of HIV/AIDS on women is particularly acute. In many developing countries, women are often economically, culturally and socially disadvantaged and lack equal access to treatment, financial support and education. In a number of societies, women are mistakenly perceived as the main transmitters of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Together with traditional beliefs about sex, blood and the transmission of other diseases, these beliefs provide a basis for the further stigma of women within the context of HIV and AIDS

HIV - positive women are treated very differently from men in many developing countries. Men are likely to be 'excused' for their behaviour that resulted in their infection, whereas women are not.

"My mother-in-law tells everybody, 'Because of her, my son got this disease. My son is as simple as good as gold-but she brought him this disease'. HIV-POSITIVE WOMAN, AGED 26, INDIA

In India, for example, the husbands who infected them may abandon women living with HIV or AIDS. Rejection by wider family members is also common. In some African countries, women, whose husbands have died from AIDS-related infections, have been blamed for their deaths.

"My mother-in-law has kept everything separate for me-my glass, my plate, they never discriminated like this with their son. They used to eat together with him. For me, it's don't do this or don't touch that and even if I use a bucket to bathe, they yell- 'wash it, wash it'. They really harass me. I wish nobody comes to be in my situation and I wish nobody does this to anybody. But what can I do? My parents and brother also do not want me back." HIV-POSITIVE WOMAN, AGED 23, INDIA



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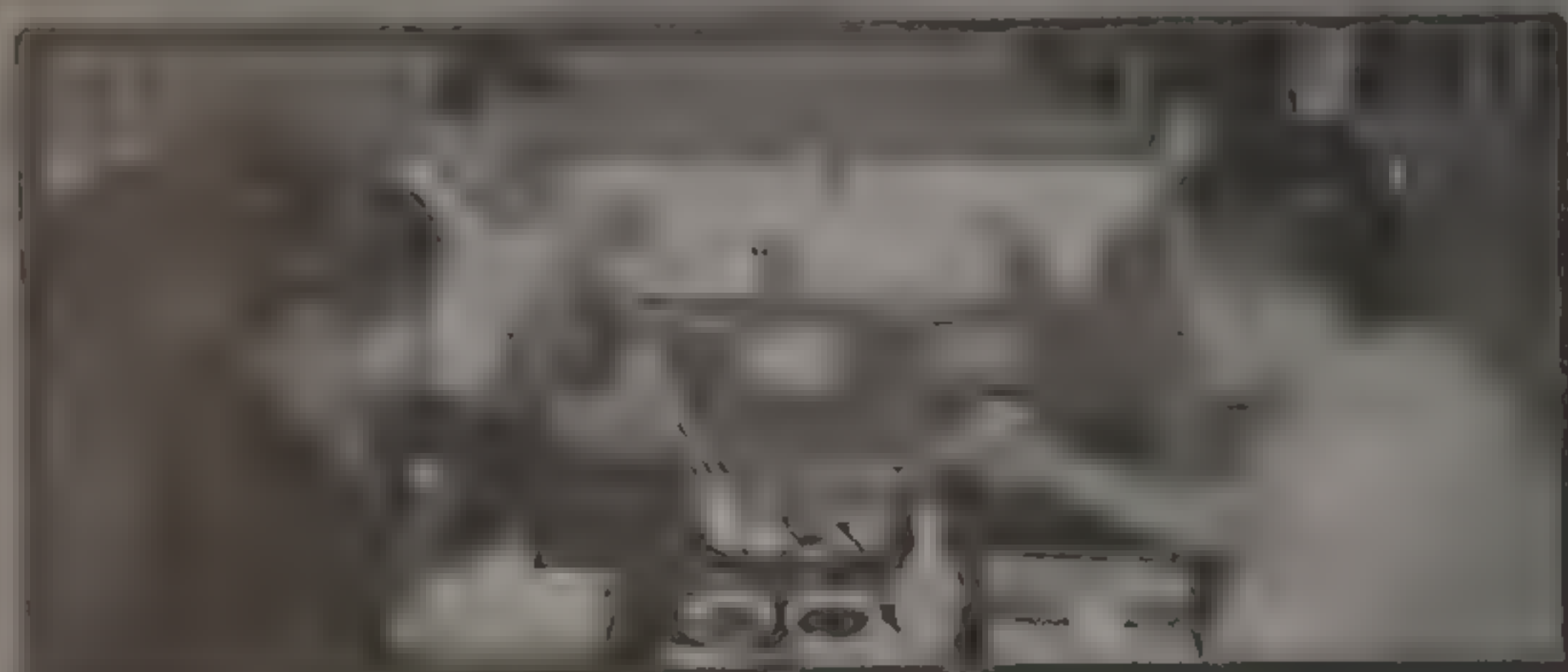


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DISH



Mike Mek

grossness like a fish scorned by undercooking. So instead, for years I've learned to avoid that trainwreck altogether and simply do without—until recently, that is, when it suddenly occurred to me that there are these things called "restaurants" that are happy to cook food and give it to you in exchange for money. And so to celebrate this rather unrelatvatory revelation of mine, my girlfriend and I headed out to the only place you should go if you're looking for seafood: **Billingsgate Seafood Market and Lighthouse Café.**

Just as the name suggests, Billingsgate is first and foremost a seafood market, and upon entering the building you'll pass by the display coolers boasting an extravagant selection of fresh fish and shellfish, just waiting to be taken home and possibly ruined by terrible cooks like me. For those who'd rather not take their chances, however, there's a dining area just past the market in the equally-aptly-named Lighthouse Café, seeing as the tables are, well, all inside a big lighthouse. Despite it only being 5:30 p.m., which is relatively early to be going out for dinner on a Friday, my girlfriend and I got in just under the wire and were shown to a table with a fantastic view of the rapidly-growing lineup of hungry customers who arrived just seconds after us.

## To the Lighthouse

Billingsgate Seafood Market is a beacon for fish fanciers

BY CHRIS BOUTET

You know, I really like fish—by which I mean "I like eating fish"; when it comes to the actual animal that's called a fish, I'm

pretty ambivalent, really—but for someone who enjoys fish so much, it's a rare occasion indeed that I actually get a chance to eat it, mostly because I never make it at home. I

### RESTAURANTS

don't know; I've always thought that fish was just too difficult to prepare for some reason, that it would be way too easy to screw it up, and as the old saying goes, hell hath no

AFTER ORDERING a half-litre of the house white (\$13.95), a light and fruity Chilean sauvignon blanc that seemed like a safe bet, we settled in and began perusing Billingsgate's substantial menu, which offers a little of everything from your traditional fish-and-chips or steak-and-lobster combos to more exotic-sounding dishes like the vodka-and-vermouth-seared jumbo prawns with tomatoes, feta and jalapeño-stuffed olives. I, however, was in the mood for a big, meaty cut of fish that night, so after some hemming and hawing, I decided to go with the grilled Hawaiian swordfish steak served with rice, vegetables and a cucumber-lemon relish

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(\$17.95); my girlfriend, meanwhile, opted for the organic spring Pacific salmon in a pecan butter sauce, served with Ecuadorean shrimp meatballs, rice and veggies (\$17.95). For some reason unconvinced that this would be enough food, we added an appetizer of mussels provençale—fresh PEI mussels steamed with garlic, white wine, sea asparagus, tomato concasse and herbs (\$8.95)—to share, before we leaned back to sip our wine and take in the surroundings.

This may sound odd considering we're talking about a restaurant that's housed inside a big fake lighthouse, but the décor is surprisingly modest: 10 or so Formica-topped tables, wrought-iron chairs, a few maritime-themed knickknacks strewn about... to be honest, the dining area's a bit dated and feels especially out of step with the modernity and fine quality of the cuisine once it hits the table. But this is admittedly a pretty minor concern, and nothing a few choice renovations wouldn't address. Ah well.

After a short time, the mussels arrived in a black cast-iron pot full of the pungent aromas of garlic and wine. Steamy and in abundance, the mussels were fantastic, soaking in a rich tomato sauce that we sopped up with a few slices of accompanying focaccia bread, but man, are there a

lot of mussels in there—almost too much for only two people, in fact, and I winced a bit as I, defeated, left a plate of food to be taken away, less than completely eaten.

**BUT THESE THINGS** have a way of working out, and once our main courses showed up, it became clear that it was a good thing I saved some room. Served with rice and a nice and pedestrian selection of sautéed vegetables, my swordfish steak was thick and meaty, lightly buttered and grilled without any marinades to cover up its subtle flavours, while the cucumber-lemon relish (which actually tasted more like raisins than anything else) served on the side in a phyllo pastry bowl complemented the juicy, fleshy texture of the fish perfectly. On the other side of the table, the spring salmon was getting

equally enthusiastic reviews; the pecan sauce provided a light crunchiness that offered a pleasant texture contrast to the soft, flaky salmon, while the shrimp meatballs held their own off to the side, not remarkable enough to steal the show, but a nice touch that made a fairly typical dish memorable.

In the end, dessert, as it so often does, turned out not to be an option, and we finished off our wine and strolled up to the counter to pay our bill, which came in just north of \$62 before tip—a fair price for an excellent meal. I think I could get used to this whole "restaurants that prepare seafood so I can't ruin it" sort of thing. ☺

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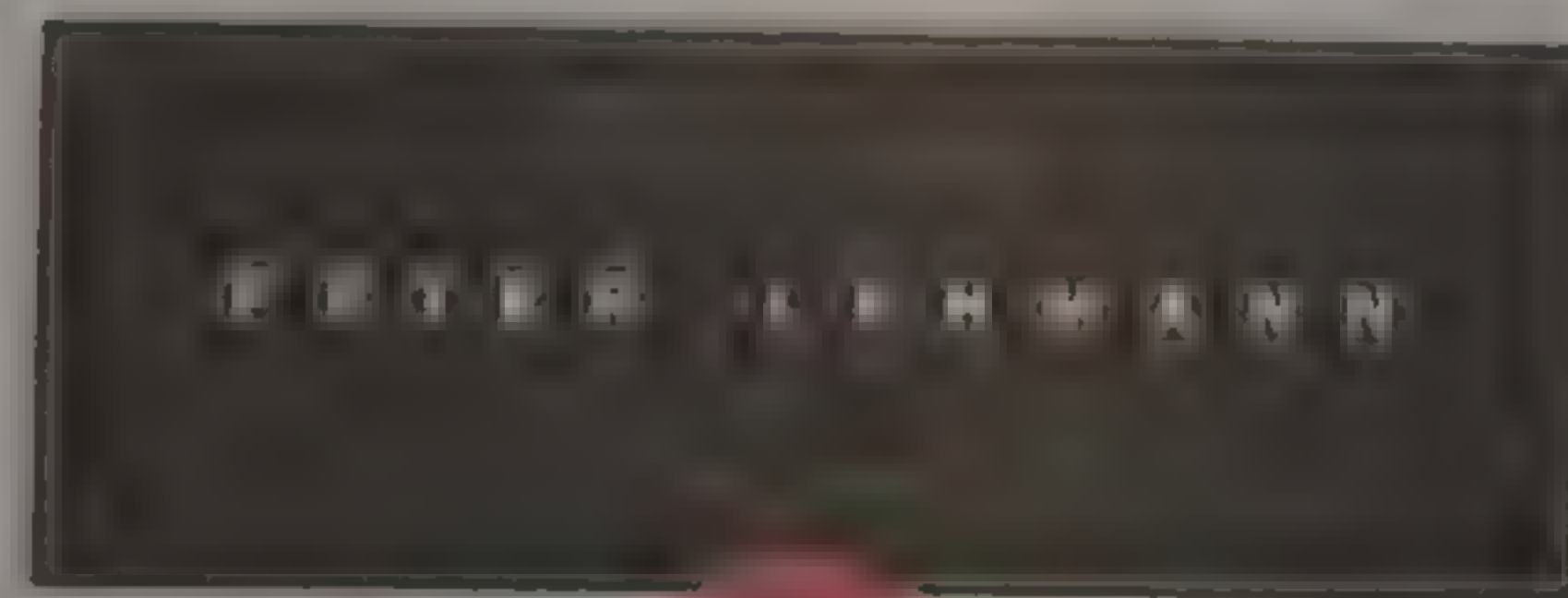
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# DISH WEEKLY

PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED RESTAURANTS

LEGEND	
Price per person, before tax and tip	
\$	— Less than \$10
\$\$	— \$10 to \$20
\$\$\$	— \$20 to \$30
\$\$\$\$	— \$30 and up

## LA SPIGA

10133-125 St • 482-3100

Some preliminary online research had told us the dress code at La Spiga was "semi-formal," which we took to simply mean "don't wear jeans," so we were completely unprepared for a *maitre d'* in jacket and tie, let alone a server one piece short of a tuxedo. Clearly we were in way over our heads. Don't believe everything you read online: the website we consulted had lowballed the prices, so we were surprised to see entrées ranging from \$25-\$35, with pastas coming in a little lower. It was obvious that a budget-minded young couple with a new baby was seriously out of place, so we opted for the high-school dating technique of multiple appetizers followed by desserts. Our server didn't blink at our entrée-less order when he returned with my wife's Frangelico-laced cappuccino (\$10.50) and my blueberry tea (\$6.75). I was just pouring my steeped tea into my snifter's Grand Marnier and amaretto when the appetizers arrived. The bruschetta (\$6) featured fluffy bread with a thin, crisp crust as a perfect base for the zesty tomatoes mounded on top. I sampled spicy pork sausage and a truly outstanding mustard herb sauce, urging the *salsiccia di casa* (\$10) on my wife, but I could tell she wasn't listening. The tangy, sweet citrus white wine sauce of the *luncheon con carciofi* (\$10) had captivated her. We were just cleaning our plates when our server reappeared with the dessert menus. His description of the terrine (\$7), a thin slab of Callebaut's finest, served frozen since it melts at room temperature, was too much for my beloved's chocolateism and she fell off the wagon. "This is the best thing I've ever had," she said. I figured that it would take something extraordinary to eclipse my delectable bourbon pecan pie drizzled in dark chocolate (\$7), but after one taste, it was clear that my wife won the dessert challenge hands down. Including tax and tip, \$70 bought us a delicious and classy soirée (though entrées could have easily doubled the bill), and if you're seeking that exceptional place for a special occasion, it doesn't get much better than La Spiga. Just remember to dress well. **Average Price: \$\$\$\$** (Reviewed 10/21/04)

## MATAHARI

101088-124 St • 452-8262

Exotic, sensual and ultra-modern, Matahari is all about the atmosphere. As we approached the restaurant from the free parking in back, the first thing we saw was the prow of a dhow: a beautiful, huge wooden boat ran the length of one wall, filled with booths; it was the McDonaldland train I begged to eat in as a child, grown up and rendered oh-so-elegant. After that, the second thing we saw was the koi pond. We managed to drag our jaws off the floor long enough to smile at the sweet, efficient server who showed us to a sage-coloured booth with a dark wooden table and smooth leather seats next to the koi. She left to prepare our Vietnamese coffees (\$2.25), Vietnamese spring rolls (\$3.50) and Thai curry puffs (\$3.95). I would have expected this spectacular environment to have inflated the prices, but we were

delighted to find nearly every dish—noodle, curry or grill—was under 10 bucks. After much debate over the wide range of dishes offered, my wife chose the Vietnamese vermicelli topped with a spring roll, lemongrass grilled pork and beef (\$7.50), while I ordered the orange pork (\$8.50). Appetizers arrived immediately afterwards, and we dug in with gusto, crunching happily on densely packed spring rolls bursting with flavour and curry puffs that boasted a spicy zing. My luscious pork and crisp vegetables swam in a tangy orange sauce next to a squared-off pyramid of fragrant jasmine rice. Generous servings of tender meats added a delicious mix of flavours to my wife's noodle bowl. We finished our meals with enough momentum to consider our dessert menus. The Roti Canai (\$4.95), however, caught my wife's eye: filled with strawberry sauce and topped with coconut ice cream, this Malaysian/Indian crepe sounded daunting, so we ordered one to split. Made from scratch, it took about 15 minutes to get to the table, and reminded me of fresh-baked waffles. Tasty, but the coconut ice cream stole the spotlight. Matahari offers a superb pan-Asian dining experience: breathless décor, sensational food and terrific prices. **Average Price: \$\$** (Reviewed 11/04/04)

## SCEPPA TRATTORIA AND DELI

10923-101 St • 425-9241

Forgive me Michael Stipe, for I have sinned. I, a normally faithful vegetarian, have lapsed in a terrible way, and I owe it all to Sceppa, a smallish Italian place with a converted-basement-rumpus-room vibe on the northeast side of downtown. After a couple of minutes, our waitress came over to our table with a basket of buns and explained the house rules: whenever you're ready, head over to the steam tables (just like the ones in your high-school cafeteria), where the cook will lead you through the items currently on offer. And, just in case nothing on the day's menu floats your boat, wood-fired pizzas are also available. My wife picked first, opting for the chicken in white wine sauce (\$12.99), dished out with carrots, onions and green peppers, along with a side of pasta. While I normally stick to a vegetarian diet, I can still occasionally be enticed into a bit of carnivorous action. Which, as it turns out, was exactly what happened when the chef opened steam tray number two, containing the veal parmigiana (\$12.99). It just looked so good, sitting there under the melted cheese, steeping in a thick, rich tomato sauce. I couldn't help myself. The veal was tender, the sauce was just how I'd imagined it would be and the cheese was the melted, gooey, proverbial icing on the cake. The rigatoni that accompanied my dish was decent but not stellar, and my wife had similar feelings about her spaghetti with meat sauce. She quite enjoyed her chicken, and found the white wine sauce to be particularly good. But homestyle grub ably complemented the informal, warm, at-a-friend's-place charm, and the staff made us feel like family. What's not to love? **Average Price: \$\$** (Reviewed 10/28/04)

## UNCLE ED'S

11401-50 St • 471-1010

I may be the last person in Edmonton to discover this, but the Mundare sausage people have a restaurant. Well, a diner. Okay, a few tables next to a takeout deli counter. Whatever. It's called Uncle Ed's and it's fantastic. The entire place boasts a rough charm, a vinyl-tablecloth-and-wood-paneling nod towards elegant décor

that's at once tacky and endearing. We both ordered a #1, a combination of sausage, four perogies, four cabbage rolls, two baked cheese buns and two cheese crepes, all for the astonishing price of \$7.95. When it arrived, I couldn't see the plate. Seriously. Every item was fresh, piping hot, and absolutely delicious. The taste of my sauerkraut perogies covered with bacon bits and served with a side of sour cream edged out my wife's, which were filled with cheddar cheese. The crepes were crisp and tasty, swimming in a fabulous sauce; the cheese buns peeled apart to release a deliciously fragrant steam. The cabbage rolls, packed tight with rice, held their own on this platter of wonder. And may I say, Mundare sausage lives up to and far surpasses its reputation. That slice of smoked meat on my plate was delicately courted all the way through my meal, slivers accompanying nearly every bite of everything else, until I finished the meal with three unadulterated bites of Stawnychy's finest. Thank you for not serving us ketchup. Sadly, my wife and I were both far too full to consider the home-made pie. We sat for a bit, waiting for the server to reappear, then realized that we would have to bring the bill up ourselves. Considering the fact we were both stuffed with sensational Ukrainian delights for less than \$25 including tax and tip, it was a small inconvenience. Cheer for the food and dance for the price as you weep for your diet at Uncle Ed's. **Average Price: \$\$** (Reviewed 11/11/04)

## VI'S FOUR PIES

13408 Stony Plain Road • 454-4300

Every day, Vi's sends out its siren call to the thousands of commuters who drive along busy Stony Plain Road: most simply travel from the west end to downtown and back. The lucky ones stop. Our lucky trio stopped to dine early on a Wednesday evening and found the café still hopping with business-casually dressed after-workers, yet just starting to fill with neighbourhood patrons. Our entrées arrived quickly amidst envious glances from other tables. My wife's chicken cheddar salsa (\$7.95) was delectable, its ingredients wrapped in crisp phyllo pastry and served with a minimalist salad. Some unidentifiable spices kicked it up half a notch, but I didn't risk asking for a third bite. My Thai peanut chicken on rice (\$9.85) was as tasty as it sounds, disorienting me with the taste of peanut butter for supper as I gorged happily on tender chicken and fluffy white rice. The crisp peanuts contrasted to the softer textures in the dish, and I adored the dill dressing on my own side of tomato, cucumber and lettuce. Before our plates were cleared, both my wife and I had time to amble separately up to the refrigerated display case to select our culinary *coup de grâce*. My wife made the unregrettable error of ordering a slice of cheesecake larger than her hand, and I decided I had come to Vi's for pie. I deliberated for five minutes over four luscious options before closing my eyes and pointing: a sensational strawberry rhubarb crumble (\$4.25), heated and served with real whipped cream, was my reward. I mowed through my dessert and another cup of coffee; we got the final third of her insurmountable cheesecake to go. (Not to worry: my wife polished it off before bed, very happy she had the foresight to bring a little dessert home with her.) Our meal easily came in under \$40, with some change in our pockets and a soft spot in our hearts for Vi. **Average Price: \$\$** (Reviewed 10/28/04)



# Attack of the filling tomatoes

Tasty Tomato's catchy name turns out to be accurate *and* alliterative!

BY CHRISTOPHER THRALL

I drive past **Tasty Tomato** twice a day, and I'm always tempted to say it out loud. "Tasty Tomato. Tasty Tomato!"—the alliteration trips lightly off the tongue. But at the same time, the name always struck me as a little pretentious—I mean, not so fast there, pal: *I'll* be the judge of what's tasty. With this goal in mind, my wife and I took the Tomato

challenge early last Thursday evening. The tiny parking lot was full (generally a good sign), which forced us to park on a side street. We were seated at the last table by the bustling kitchen. So far, so good.

Our table was lit by a small oil lamp and the dim halogen above cast delicate shadows across my bride's features, her luminous eyes catching the candle's flame when she looked up from the menu with a smile. Covering the basics with homemade pastas and sauces, the menu was appetizing but not terribly adventurous. To drink, we decided on chinottos (\$2.25), Italian sodas our server described as "root beer-y." My wife selected the cannelloni (\$11.95) and I the penne cirio (\$11.95). I asked the server how to pronounce my dish ("cheerio"? "seerio"? "keerio"?), but she refused to answer: apparently, working for a genuine Italian family discourages one from affecting the slightest authority on pronunciation.

The atmosphere was exactly as I hoped: a crowded neighbourhood place full of warm family charm. Decorative touches in cherrywood and earth tones kept the place modern, but I half-expected to see the Tramp offering his Lady the last meatball out back, serenaded by a pair of accordion-bearing Italian stereotypes. Lost in my animated romantic reverie, our busy but attentive waitress surprised me with her quick return, bearing our

drinks and a plate of oil and vinegar to accompany a basket of fresh, warm focaccia bread. We made short work of one of our favourite appetizers, washing it down with the fizzy, clove-tasting chinottos. A refreshing change from Coke, I nonetheless found the "bitter orange" soda getting more caustic as I drank. This must be an acquired taste. I had largely switched to water by the time our entrées made their entrance.

**ARRIVING IN A CLOUD** of distinctly tomato-y aroma, our entrées, both swimming in spicy, zingy, reddish sauce, got a pair of "A"s for presentation. My penne

cirio turned out to be grown-up spaghetti and meatballs: the homemade penne was thick and chewy while the lean meat pellets scattered through the dish added to the flavour. I jumped at the chance to sample the cannelloni when my wife offered me a bite. The tender veal was wrapped in a thinner pasta and baked with mozzarella in Tasty's signature tomato sauce. Both were delicious, and I bemoaned only the lack of fresh ground pepper or grated parmesan cheese; pasta dishes just don't seem complete to me without them.

We polished off our meals with pleasure. Our server had an easy time pressing us to consider the dessert menu, but with only ice cream or gelato to offer, we simply weren't in the mood. With tax and a generous tip, we dined well for under \$40. And while warm, inexpensive and neighbourly, it didn't dazzle. To tell you the truth, I was relieved. Honest self-promotion is something I value very highly. I would have had trouble if they had chosen a name like "Pasta Perfection" or "Incomparable Italian," but the more modest and realistic "Tasty Tomato" is both descriptive and accurate. Mind you, when you're satisfying the comfort-food needs of a full restaurant on a regular basis, do you really have to worry about being dazzling? ☺

**TASTY TOMATO**

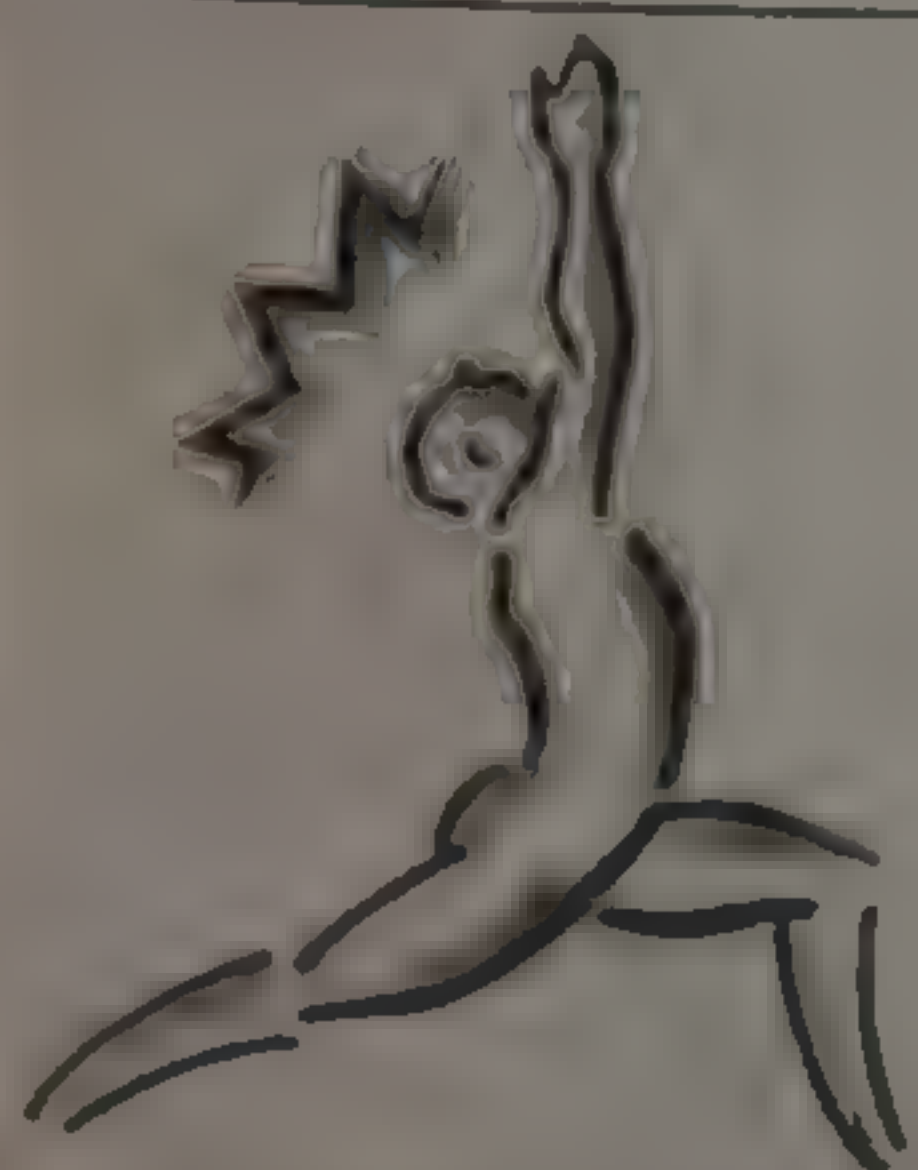
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## RESTAURANTS



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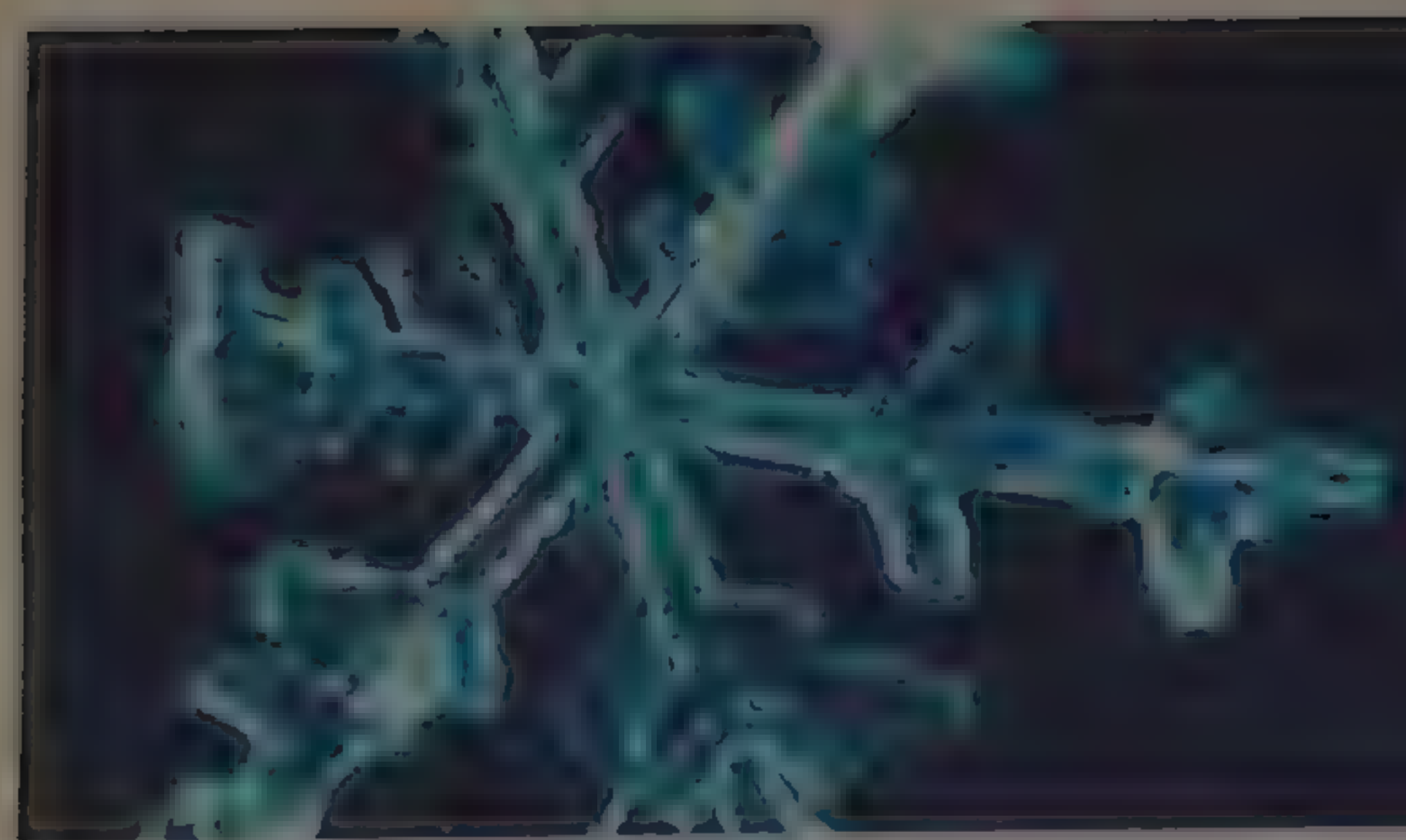
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# Snow Zone

IN VUEWEEKLY

Snowmaking equipment means things are already hopping at local hill

By JAMES RADKE

I hadn't been back to my old stomping ground for 13 years, but I was relieved to discover that Rabbit Hill snow resort, just outside Edmonton, hasn't lost any of its charm. I was an instructor at Rabbit from 1988 to 1991. I was young, I needed the money and Rabbit Hill fed my addiction to snow. Pulling up to the hill last week, I almost felt as though I'd never left; the only difference was that I was older and the kids riding in the terrain park looked a lot younger.

It was a nice, sunny day, about two degrees Celsius, and you could tell that Edmonton and Rabbit Hill had experienced a heat wave just a few days earlier. Only the Terrain Park and some of the beginner slopes were open. But even with the warm weather and an uncooperative Mother Nature, Rabbit Hill was still an impressive sight for a lost local such as I: thanks to Rabbit Hill's extensive snowmaking equipment, there was a lot of snow on the slope despite the warm conditions. I talked to one of my old bosses, Rabbit Hill owner Bill Oak, and he was happy with the day's turnout. "People don't realize what snowmaking can do with the warm weather and the plus-16 degrees a week ago," he said. "We are trying to open Bay Street; let's just pray for snow and cooler weather."

Due to the continued popularity of snowboarding in Edmonton, Rabbit Hill decided to make opening the terrain park their top priority. In previous years, it was always Bay Street that opened first and the decision to open a terrain park before other areas of the hill was right on the money.

Once the snow starts to fall and the weather co-operates, Rabbit Hill will undoubtedly resume its place as the leader in local snow sport activities. With a huge terrain park, a Banzai halfpipe (which hasn't opened yet, but will as soon as conditions become favourable), top-to-bottom rails and random hits, Rabbit Hill is a favourite place to ride. And hopefully, the Edmonton premiere of the new Warren Miller film will get the blood rushing through the veins of our weekend warriors and get many of them out to enjoy some local slopes.

Rabbit Hill is open weeknights from 4-9 p.m. until December, and all day long on weekends. ☺

## Rabbit Hill



ski tips

By COLIN CATHREA

### Let's all train for all-terrain

Becoming proficient in all-terrain skiing is one of the handiest skills to possess on the hills. As a kid, I raced at the Edmonton Ski Club and mastered ice. But if the light conditions were poor, so was my skiing, since I relied on sight for most all my co-ordination. And whenever I went to train with the Jasper Ski Team, I was blown away at how these kids could blast through any terrain, any conditions or anybody. They had mastered the art of "the feel," as I call it. Bad weather had taught the Jasperites how to feel what was going on beneath their skis.

Lucky you: over the course of this week and next week, I will explain how to practice certain techniques that will allow you to dominate any type of terrain that the mountains can throw at you.

First, I'll go over equipment. New skis bear all sorts of confusing labels, like "All Mountain," "Free Ride," and so forth. Most skis will handle all terrain fairly well, but "All Mountain" or "All Terrain" skis are constructed with versatility in mind. The Salomon "X-Scream" series, for instance, is not built for slalom, GS or ice. It doesn't have the ridged flex patterns that high-speed skis have, or soft flex like powder skis. What they do have is a decent side-cut, a moderate flex pattern and other characteristics that help skiers in all conditions.

When you're skiing these types of boards, keep in mind that most all terrain skiers will be using similar techniques, but everyone is different. It's important to find a good ski shop that understands how various brands differ and how they may suit your particular technique. When you jump on a pair of these skis, you'll find you have a lot more confidence to try terrain you may have previously steered away from or had trouble with.

Remember, however, that equipment is just one piece of the puzzle. Understanding what body positions to adopt in uncharted domains is as important as your equipment—the standard groomed run technique is not going to cut it in a windblown couloir. Next week I'll go over specifics to have you cruising every nook and cranny those giant granite slabs can throw at you. ☺





# Sudden Impact

As usual, ski season kicks off with a new documentary from Warren Miller

BY HART GOLBECK

The Jubilee Auditorium is closed for renovations, which means ski buffs had to wait a little longer to get our annual Warren Miller fix this year, but last Friday I headed off to the Winspear and joined a packed house of local powder hounds to take in one of two back-to-back screenings of the legendary filmmak-

er's latest documentary, *Impact*. I don't get to the Winspear often, but my guess is that we probably threw a lot more paper airplanes than the building's usual crowd. (One of the biggest cheers of the night, in fact, went to the glider that soared from the top balcony and settled right into the ballot box on the stage.)

Warren Miller turned 80 this year, but he shows no signs of slow-

FILM

ing down—once again, that familiar voice of his narrates the action, and there are few sounds in this world that get me more in the mood to hit the slopes. It was good to hear it

again: "Hi, I'm Warren Miller and I've been chasing people down these slopes for 55 years."

*Impact* was shot in places like Alaska, Bulgaria, Switzerland, France and—surprise!—our own beautiful Canadian Rockies. Although Sunshine Village, Lake Louise and Marmot Basin are mentioned several times in the film, most of the footage was shot in and around the steeps of Sunshine. That's too bad, since Travel Alberta is one of the film's main sponsors and Marmot didn't get the footage it deserved. (There are hopeful rumours, however, that a return trip is in the offing for Miller's produc-

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# The EASYRIDER Condition Report

## LOCAL

Rabbits Hill - 35cm base, limited terrain open  
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## ALBERTA

Castle Mtn - 45cm base, 15cm new snow  
Can. Olympic Park - open daily 9am - 10pm  
Fortress - opening TBA  
Lake Louise - 41 - 51cm base, 2cm new snow, reduced adult rate in effect.  
Marmot Basin - Opening Nov 26th, 33cm base, daily operation starting Dec 11th.  
Mt. Norquay - 63cm base, 4 lifts and 20 runs open.  
Nakiska - 40cm base, daily operation starting Dec 11th.  
Sunshine - 61cm base, 4cm new snow, 7 lifts and 50 runs open.

## B.C.

Apex - 68cm base, 15cm new snow  
Big White - Opening Nov 25th, 98cm base, 31cm new snow  
Crystal Mtn - opening TBA  
Fernie - Opening Dec 10th  
Fairmont - Opening Dec 17th  
Kicking Horse - Opening Dec 17th, mid mtn base 40m  
Kimberley - Opening Dec 18th w/ night skiing starting Dec 23rd  
Mt. Washington - opening TBA  
Panorama - 40cm base, opening Dec 10th  
Powder King - no info available yet  
Powder Springs - Opening Dec 18th, upper mtn base 120cm  
Red Mtn - Opening Dec 10th for daily operation, 59cm base  
Silver Star - 79cm base, 17cm new snow  
Sun Peaks - 66cm base, 24cm new snow  
Whistler Blackcomb - 84cm base, 3cm new snow  
Whitewater - Opening Dec 11th, 80cm base

## The US of A

Big Mtn - 64cm base at Mtn top, reduced rate in effect until Dec 19th  
Big Sky - Opening Dec 25th, 45cm base, early season disc in effect.  
49 Degrees - 12cm new snow, opening TBA  
Great Divide Ski Area - opening TBA  
Lookout Pass - 10cm new, opening TBA  
Mt. Spokane - 45cm base, 7cm new snow, opening TBA  
Schweitzer Mtn - 90cm base at summit, 7cm new snow  
Silver Mtn - Opening Dec 3rd, 50cm base at Kellogg peak, 15cm new snow  
Sun Valley - 53cm base, opening TBA

SNOWZONE

# board zone

By JAMES RADKE

## The Almanac... and how to get it

Will it snow and where? Whether you're planning your holiday shred trip or deciding on which mountain town you're moving to this winter, it's the biggest question to consider. Most of us have realized that chasing the snow never really works. That fresh two feet is going to be groomed-down and moguled-out long before you get there. It's all about being in the right place at the right time. With most weather reports predicting only one week into the future, they become pretty useless if airplane reservations or any kind of pre-planning is involved.

Well, the new *Farmers' Almanac* (yeah, the same one your grandparents buy at the grocery store check-out) is one resource you might be overlooking. Buried in those directions for canning tomatoes and knitting slippers are some wicked predictions for this winter's snowfall, although the forecasts are based on misty things like sunspots, the position of the planets and tidal action caused by the moon instead of the familiar Doppler radar, jet streams and barometric pressure. The *Almanac* divides the country into seven zones and provides weather predictions for each zone in three-day chunks. Check out a copy and maybe just discreetly hide it in the new issue

of your snowboard mag—I mean, seriously, who reads that thing?

So what's on tap for this winter? The *Almanac's* long-range weather predictions point towards a variable winter with alternating periods of unseasonably cold conditions and unseasonable warmth for the entire country. It even predicts the biggest dumps of the winter. It's a little unscientific, but here's what the little book says December looks like in Alberta:

**December 1-3:** For the western slopes of the Rockies and all points east, stormy conditions prevail: rain, snow, then clear and cold.

**December 4-7:** Another storm from British Columbia moves into Rockies by the 7th.

**December 8-11:** Storm from the Rockies brings snow to Prairies.

**December 12-15:** Pacific storm brings widespread rain, snow to Rockies.

**December 16-19:** Considerable cloudiness; a snow flurry.

**December 20-23:** Waves of storminess produce periods of heavy rain, snow. Bitterly cold temperatures follow.

**December 24-27:** Generally fair, dry and very cold for Christmas, Boxing Day.

**December 28-31:** Snow.

The 2005 *Canadian Farmers' Almanac* features an orange and green cover and is on sale everywhere magazines are sold, and online at [www.farmersalmanac.com](http://www.farmersalmanac.com).

## Impact

Continued from previous page

tion team.) The skiers and riders featured in the Sunshine segment are locals from Canmore, Calgary and Banff, and they provide us with five breathtaking minutes of Rocky Mountain cliffs, chutes and gravity-defying tricks. Miller lauds the local skiers' talents on the slopes at the beginning of the film, only to add, "But don't ask them to talk." Still, Andrew Hardingham, a boarder from Banff, scores some of the best lines in the film: "Some urban kids, they've got their jungle gyms," he says, "but I've got my Cascade Mountains." (He goes on to say, "I

could be getting a tan in Barbados but for now I'd rather be pale.")

**THERE MUST BE** a job board somewhere that says: "Hi, I'm Warren Miller and I'm looking for snow enthusiasts that will jump off anything. Call me—let's talk." *Impact* is loaded with death-defying leaps from cliffs, jumps, stairs, helicopters and riding on mini-avalanches. Of course, Miller sprinkles in a few wipeouts too, although this year there aren't nearly as many as usual.

Perhaps the film's most unique segment is a horseback ride a few skiers took up the slopes at Big Sky Montana after the lifts were closed for the season. They strapped the skis and camping gear on the horses and headed up for a few days of fabulous turns. (Getting on the horses was another story. Apparently no one asked them if they knew how to ride.)

If you weren't able to make it to the Winspear on Friday, *Impact* should be available on DVD within a couple of months. This isn't Miller's best film, but the rare Alberta footage definitely makes it worth checking out. And there's still no one who kicks the season into high gear better than Warren Miller.



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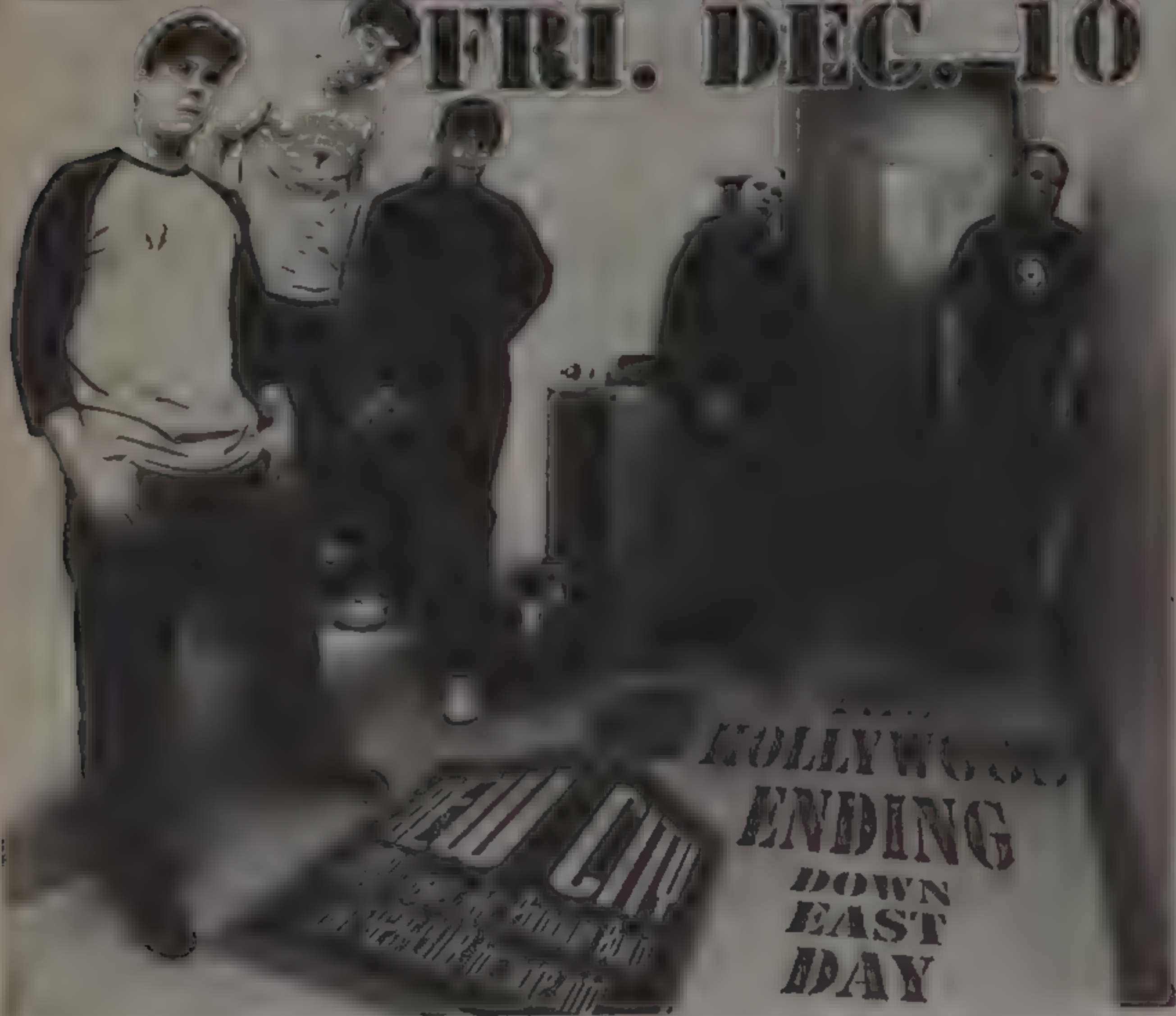




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# to video

## On the Verge: Sugakane

After their recent rock 'n' roll business trip to Los Angeles, the five members of Edmonton's **Sugakane** are starting to get noticed by our southern neighbours. Their new four-song EP *Out of Time* was released earlier this fall, and the album's title track was recently treated to the big-budget video prowess of Intraxx. We sat down with guitarist Nyles Varughese to talk about it.

**Vue Weekly:** What's the concept for your flashy new fancy-ass video?

**Nyles Varughese:** The concept is still kind of being edited.... It's mostly a performance video, but there is a background to it where our singer is schizophrenic, so you kind of go into his mind and delve into his demons. His girlfriend is the saviour in the video and he's on an operating table having surgery—you see different clips of his inner mind. Chris Haimo, the Los Angeles director, came up with the concept, and we thought it was really pretty cool.

**VW:** Where was it shot?

**NV:** There were two sites: one in

downtown Edmonton, and our performance footage was done at the Muttart Conservatory.

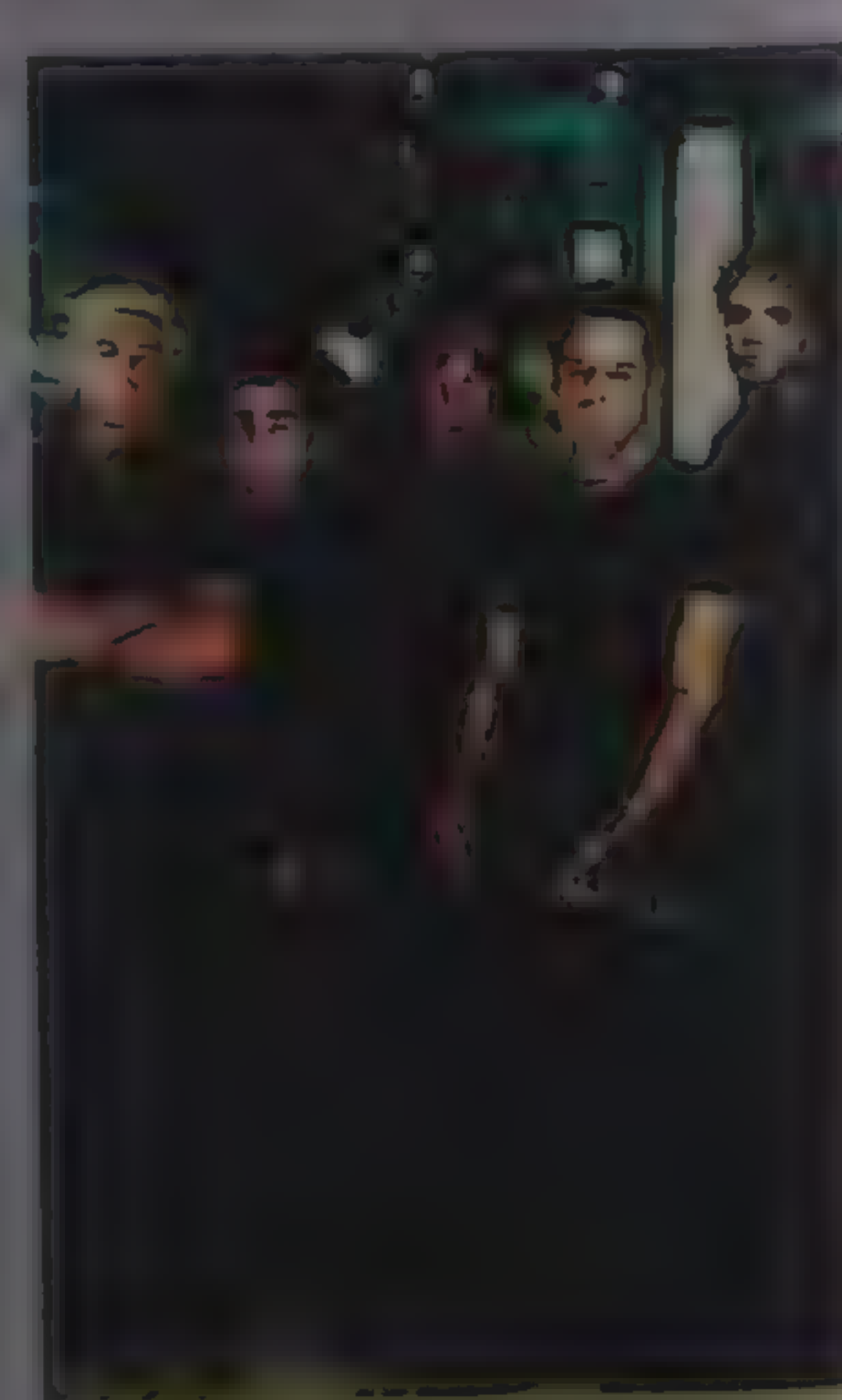
**VW:** Why did you decide to make the video?

**NV:** I think if you look at MuchMusic, MTV or anything like that, you see that image is almost as important as music these days. I don't know if that's bad; it is what it is, and I think it's crucial that people get to see what the band looks like. People watch videos as much as they listen to radio, so I think it's extremely important to breaking through these days.

**VW:** Why should people get off the couch, put their pants on and come check out the Verge?

**NV:** Some of the bands in Edmonton are just awesome, and I think with a little direction, a lot of them could make it pretty far: it's just meeting the right people and having a bit of luck. I think the Verge is going to show that Edmonton bands are legitimate, and that they are getting some interest from the States—people should come out and

support their local bands.... If they make it big you can say, 'Hey, I supported these bands before they made it big' instead of riding the bandwagon after they get successful.



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# Five local bands unveil their glossy new videos at the Verge

BY HEATHER ADLER

Video really has killed the radio star. From nearly naked pop stars to rockers with more silver in their face than in every bank in Algeria combined, the music video has become a huge factor in our perception of today's artists. And no one knows that better than the bands trying to get noticed while creating their art thousands of miles away from where showbiz lives.

Edmonton has never exactly been mentioned in the same breath as musical power centres like New York, Los Angeles, London or Toronto, but one production company and many of this city's finest artists are trying to change that, starting this week with the Verge. This Wednesday, Sugakane, Tupelo Honey, King Ring Nancy, Politic Live and the Jay Murphy Band will be playing live at the Winspear as well as showcasing their brand new, big-budget music videos in the hopes of impressing a roomful of labels, managers and A&R types.

"I think it's going to be an eye-opener that makes people realize we do have our own sound—that there is solid talent and the production teams here are first-class," explains Michael Maxxis, the event organizer and a producer with the Edmonton-based production company Intraxx. "Not only are these bands good on their CDs, they also have an image, put on great live shows and have the entire package down."

As a well-known local film producer, Maxxis is no stranger to celluloid; however, his work with the quintet of Edmonton music makers marks his first foray into music cinematography. Maxxis got the idea to start the Intraxx project a few months ago after speaking with his

close friend Chris Halmo, a Los Angeles-based director. "It was a music supervision company that we created just because I knew so many bands," Maxxis explains, "and Chris is one of the top commercial editors in North America—he edits for MGD, Chanel, Diesel Jeans, Adidas. So we thought, 'Let's start a music supervision company and get these bands' music into commercials.' But then we quickly thought it might make more sense to do music videos. We approached the top bands in the city and talked to them about doing videos."

"The guy that shot them was Peter Wunstorf—he's the one that shot *Millennium*, *Dark Angel* and *Smallville*—

## PREVIEW SHOWCASE

and they were done on 35mm film with HD, so the budgets were all probably between \$40,000 and \$50,000 each," Maxxis continues. "They weren't low-end at all, and that budget was with us watching what we did with the money, so they look like they're worth a lot more."

**MAXXIS'S L.A. CONNECTIONS** came in handy for the shoots as many of them were partially shot down in the City of Angels. But the trips the bands took south of the border weren't just for the scenery—Maxxis also took it upon himself to introduce the acts to industry insiders. "I arranged for a lot of meetings and trips with the bands in L.A. because I happen to know a lot of people down there," he says. "In all honesty, per capita, the bands here are better than they are down there—the L.A. music scene is pretty weak, so it's a great opportunity for bands to be recognized when they start showing what

they can do down there.

"Also, L.A. is where the managers and record labels are," Maxxis continues, "so when a band comes down with a great new sound and great package, they impress people down there who can make things happen.... You can sell out shows in Edmonton every day, but you're never going to have someone in that crowd that has the power to sign you to a big deal or take you to the top; in L.A., you never know who you will meet or what will happen."

But maybe, with time, Edmonton's status as an inconsequential prairie town will change—at least, that's what Maxxis hopes will eventually happen. "I think the mentality may be a little on the artistic side in Edmonton," he explains, "which is great because we get great creative people here, but that doesn't always attract money or investment into things. It's the sad truth, but that's how it is.... The other thing is, there's never been a unified push or movement by Edmonton artists to get noticed. Now we have these five bands and a production team that's doing all this stuff at once, so it's not just one artist here and one cameraman over there—it's everyone coming together for one big push. I think it's going to change things."

**EVENT HOST GORDIE JOHNSON**, of Big Sugar fame, knows firsthand how hard it is to make it in music when you're from the Prairies. That's just one of the reasons why he'll be flying up from his current home in Austin, Texas to play a couple of tunes and emcee the evening. "I'm doing this purely for the support of original, local music," Johnson explains. It's easy to support

SEE PAGE 36

## On the Verge: Jay Murphy Band

After a short six-month stint in the Edmonton scene, the **Jay Murphy Band** is already diving headfirst into the music business. Their album *Propaganda* was produced by the Tea Party's fashionably tormented Jeff Martin and renowned knob-turner Nick Blagona (the Tea Party, Moist, Foo Fighters), and now the video for their song "Hit Bottom" is one of the clips that will be showcased at the Verge. Lead singer Jay Murphy told us what the experience was like.

**Vue Weekly:** What's the concept for your flashy new fancy-ass video?

**Jay Murphy:** Content-wise, it basically follows the story behind the song, which was about people dealing with drugs, withdrawals and manic depression. I basically told the director about the concept of the song and, being the professionals that they are, they came up with the concept for it.... My band basically just play themselves, and I play the lead character who is dealing with depression issues. He avoids taking his medication, which causes a mental spiral, and the video also looks at what it does

to the people around him. We wanted to show the difference in public perception between what real depression is and what people imagine it is: you're not this crazy, insane person in an asylum—you're a typical person who just has some chemical issues in your head.

**VW:** Where was it shot?

**JM:** We shot it in L.A. and, truthfully, it was insane. There was a big crew and we shot some really sketchy parts of the city—the worst parts of downtown, some seedy hotels and people's houses that we took over. Working with the actors beside me was really great too.

**VW:** Why did you decide to make the video?

**JM:** It seems like the new template for music requires you to get broken by MuchMusic or MTV. Before things ever get to radio you often see them there, but that's not why we did it—we did it because we're interested in art and we saw this as an extension of our art.

**VW:** Why should people get off the couch, put their pants on and come check out the Verge?

**JM:** If you're interested in what's

happening around you, this will give you some perspective, and all the bands that are performing there are just really good at what they're doing. It's not really about supporting local music as much as it is about supporting music in general. —HEATHER ADLER



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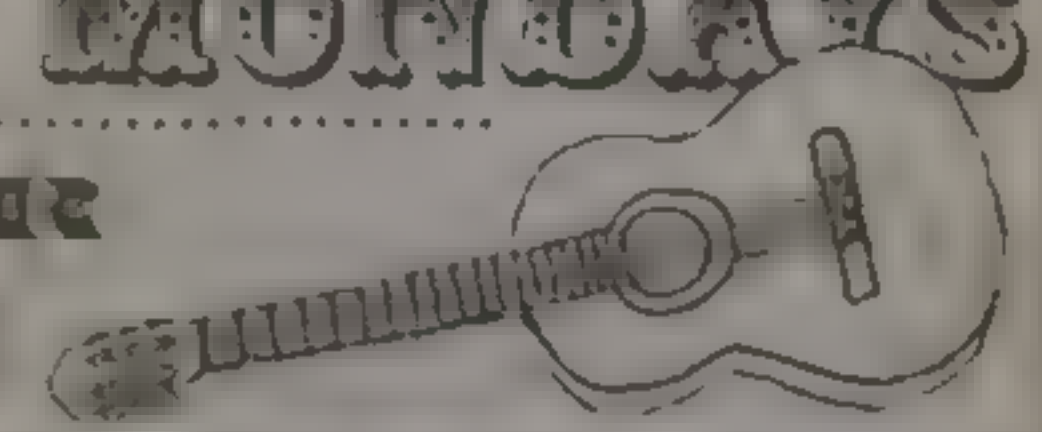
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## MUSIC



## music notes

BY PHIL DUPERRON

### Driven to Distraction

**Coral Egan • Opening for Matt Dusk • Sidetrack Café • Thu, Nov 25** Montreal chanteuse Coral Egan established herself as a jazz singer with *The Path of Least Resistance*, her 2002 Juno-nominated album of jazz standards. But with *My Favourite Distraction*, Egan has redefined herself as a singer/songwriter. The disc, released last February on Justin Time Records, was completely written and composed

by Egan, which made the project a challenging and emotional personal success for the young musician.

"The first album took about nine days," says Egan, "and that includes mixing. We already had the material—it was a duo and so it was very, very easy. I was doing what I do best, which is interpreting as a singer. That, for me, was really a pleasure, and it was easy. Doing my own album took about six months, maybe a little bit more for pre-production, and it ripped inside. I was very vulnerable. It was a very difficult thing, but also just a completely satisfying thing. So, I think I'm much happier doing what I'm doing now because it includes so much more than just being a singer—it was definitely a completely different production."

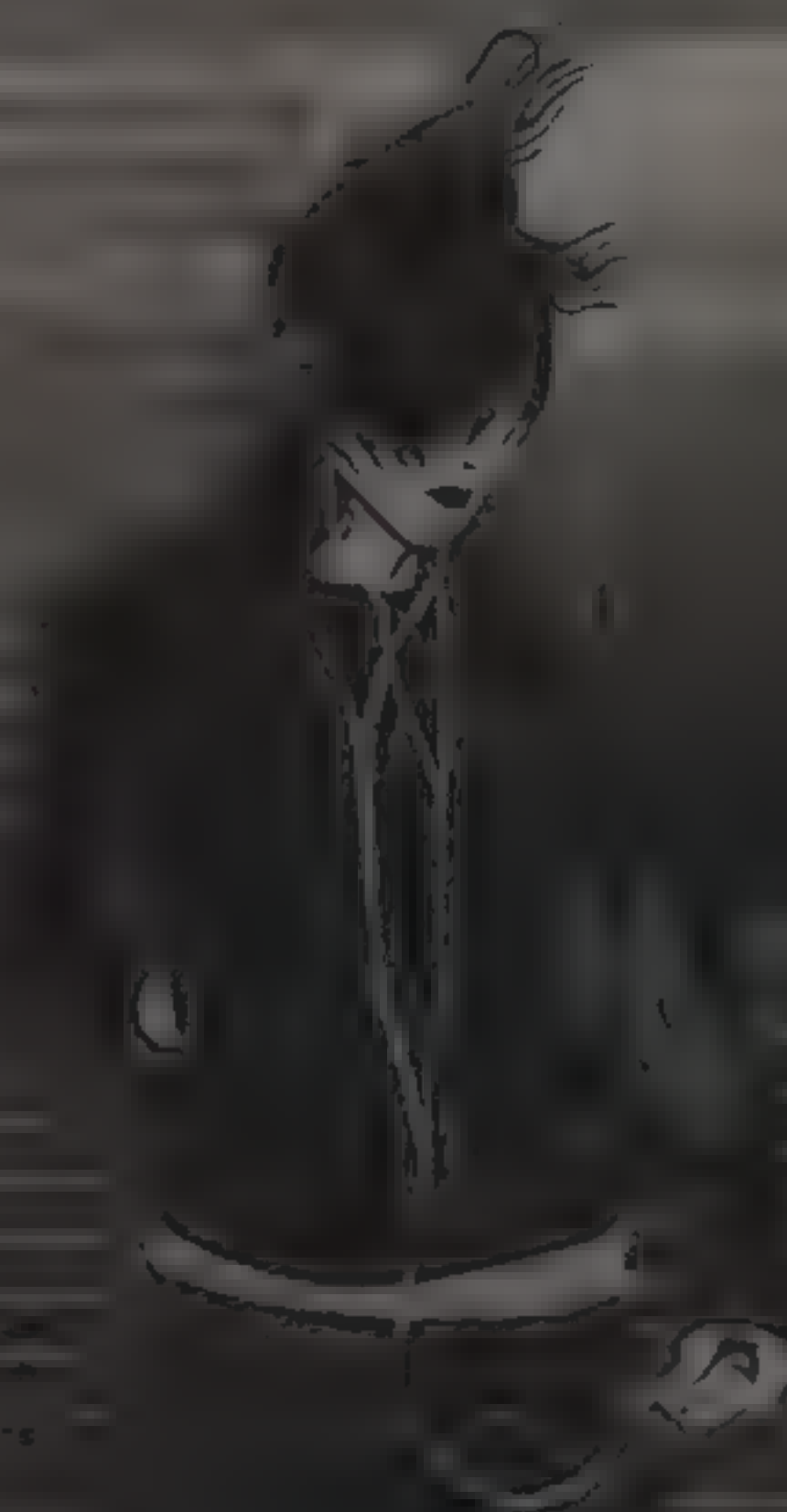
With a new band behind her (although she'll play the Sidetrack as a duo), Egan has left the world of jazz behind her, at least for now, to focus on her own music. While the disc definitely shows off her jazzy roots, it's also a mix

of contemporary styles from R&B to folk. Although laypeople often consider any mellow-sounding music with keyboards "jazz," that attitude doesn't mesh with Egan's definition of the term. "How I define jazz is music with improvisation," she explains. "To me, that kind of defines what jazz is because jazz can embrace any style, but when there's improvisation, to me it's jazz."

Still, it's not important to Egan what people call her music, as long as they are listening to it and being moved by it. "There's people who don't spend a lot of time trying to understand music," she says, "so the easiest thing to do is to label it. I don't think it's a terrible thing to do; I think it's very understandable. People are having a very hard time defining [my sound], but that's fine by me. If you look at Peter Gabriel, if you look at Beck or even at Joni Mitchell, when you try and define what they are, the only thing you can say is, 'Well, they are them. They are their own music.'

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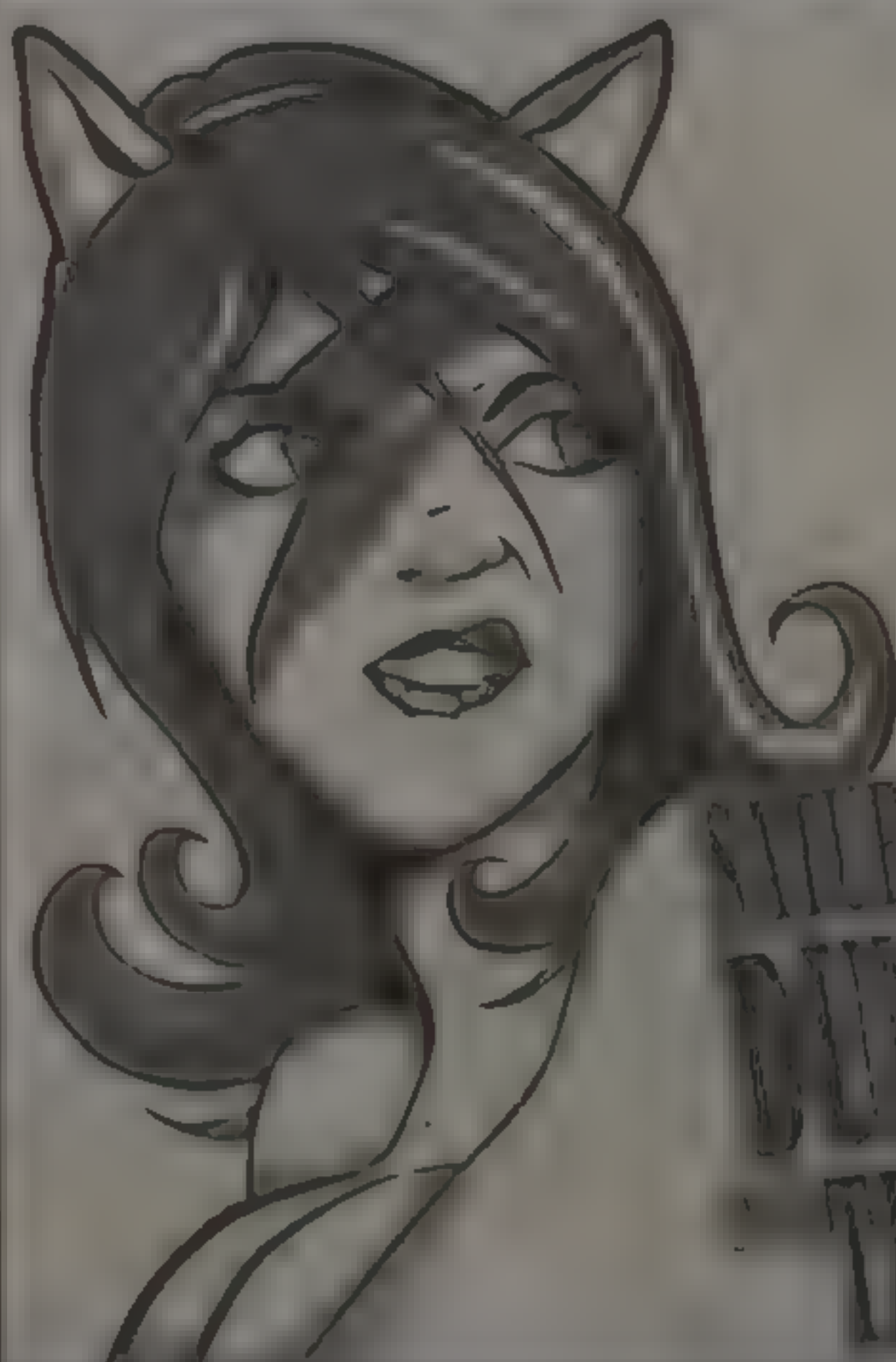
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Those are my favourite artists and I think that was what I was trying to aspire to."

## Enter Sandmen

**The Dark Sand • With Budd Pluggsdt and Tex-Ass Mikey and Issues • Starlite Room • Fri, Nov 26** The Dark Sand have always done things a little differently. The local five-piece's unique sound draws on diverse influences from metal to jazz, and by February, they hope to release a full-blown double CD, a rarity in a world where people's attention span can be measured in nanoseconds.

Guitarist Brent Ankrom says the band has been recording their opus at their own Sundiver Studios, and this Friday's gig will hopefully provide them with enough cash to get it pressed. "We figure, we've got our own studio, we've got the time, you know what I mean?" Ankrom says. "We don't really have to worry about studio costs so we can experiment and spend a lot of time in there. We figure, if you're going to go through the whole press and promotion for a CD, then why not do a double? Nobody local does double CDs." The first disc will contain all the complicated studio musings the band isn't likely to try playing live, while the rest of the package will feature the aggressive, off-the-wall tunes that have become their signature.

After searching high and low around town, the Dark Sand has finally tracked down a keyboardist and possible sixth member of their tribe. Although it's too soon to tell if he'll be a permanent fixture, he'll be playing a few songs on Friday night, adding to the carnivalesque atmosphere the band likes to project. "There's so much of the same stuff out there and it's not too often you get to see a real original act come through," Ankrom explains. "That's what we want to be. We want to be something that people can talk about. Something that sticks in their head."

## The basement tapes

**Fil • With Manhattan Jack • Seedy's • Sat, Nov 27** With the rising popularity of the aggressive yet catchy sounds of pop-punk, many young musicians figure all it takes is some exposure and they'll be as big as Good Charlotte in no time. But others, like young Calgary upstarts Fil, take pains to couple the new sound with the down-to-earth DIY ethic that made punk cool in the first place.

The three young lads in Fil started out while they were still in junior high, forging a strong musical bond that's carried them through the dicey early years of hall shows and house parties with their friendship still intact. "We're all one big giant family," says bassist Nick Hesson. "You can't go wrong when the three of you are best friends. A lot of bands I've seen, they always argue about this and that—shit happens and they end up breaking up. But someone like us, we've known each other for so long, we'll argue and we'll say our points, but we're never going to take it to that extreme."

Although they released a rough



**The Deadcats • Sidetrack Café • Thu, Nov 18 • reVUE** What a night for Edmonton's swelling greaser crowd. First, our own (and only) psychobilly sensation, Raygun Cowboys, played a fiery set before Winnipeg's the Rowdyman got down and dirty with some more traditional rockabilly. Even though the capable lasses of Capital City Burlesque had the crowd's fingers snapping and eyes popping to some sexy doo-wop numbers, the night belonged to the Deadcats. Teaming up on his flaming gutbucket—that's a washtub bass for all you squares—frontman Scooter led the Vancouver howlers on a blazing romp across genres. The folks filled the floor and gave their dancing shoes a workout as the Deadcats belted out a sludgy mix of haunted garage, surf and 'billy. Fire, girls and the day's music, all served up piping hot—it's enough to twist anyone's pompadour in knots. —PHIL DUPERRON

demo back in their early days, Fil decided to do a little soul-searching before going into the studio to record their upcoming "official" debut record, *Gone From Frame*. "We locked ourselves in the basement and didn't play shows for almost a year," Hesson explains. "Everyday we tried to practice, and at first it was like, 'Wow, where did all these songs come from—what the hell?' And then you think about it: 'Well, shit, we practised quite a bit, you know, and practice makes perfect. I'm just looking forward to what next year brings.'"

## A well-'Honed live show

**The Mahones • With Grrr! and Nathan Rogers • Sidetrack Café • Sat, Nov 27** Since forming on a drunken St. Patrick's Day way back in 1990, the Mahones have taken their Celtic-punk sound around the world and back again. With six whiskey-soaked albums under their belt and a new one, *Take No Prisoners*, almost finished, they ought to be some of Canada's favourite sons by now. Unfortunately, the preponderance of lukewarm fiddle-rock at every folk festival in North America has left many people tired of Celtic music, even the

good stuff. But the Mahones are no Great Big Sea, and their live show contains far more spit than polish. "We invented the style we play a long time ago in this country and it's always been punk rock," says singer/guitarist Finny McDonnell. "It's always been Irish punk—we've never changed it. We've dabbled in different things, but we've always stayed true to our punk roots."

The Mahones, like many current Canadian bands, have found Europe to be their ideal stomping grounds. Not only is the distance to travel from show to show much shorter, but Europeans also seem to have an even greater craving for live music, and their taste isn't limited by what they see and hear on the radio or TV. "We've been touring Europe to crazy crowds and doing huge festivals since 1998," says McDonnell. "It's rockin' over there and people are very open-minded. At a festival there, there'll be, like, a punk band, an Irish band and an African band—everybody loves everything, whereas here people are alt-snobs and stuff. 'Ewww, if you don't sound like Broken Social Scene I don't like you,' you know? They don't get that snobbery in Europe and it's unfortunate for Canadians to have that." ☐



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Black and White / Saint Patrick's*  
*MauleMusic  
The Mahones / 100th Foundation*  
*The Edmonton Food Bank*

*MauleMusic  
Killer / The Mahones / The Mahones*  
*MauleMusic  
Killer / The Mahones / The Mahones*  
*MauleMusic  
Killer / The Mahones / The Mahones*

**Friday Dec. 10**  
**DRIVE BY PUNCH**  
**DOWN EAST DAY**  
& guests



**Friday December 17**  
**RUCKUS COMPILATION CD RELEASE SHOW**  
**HELVIS JAMES T KIRKS**  
**BLACK MARKET INC PIND**



# Megatunes

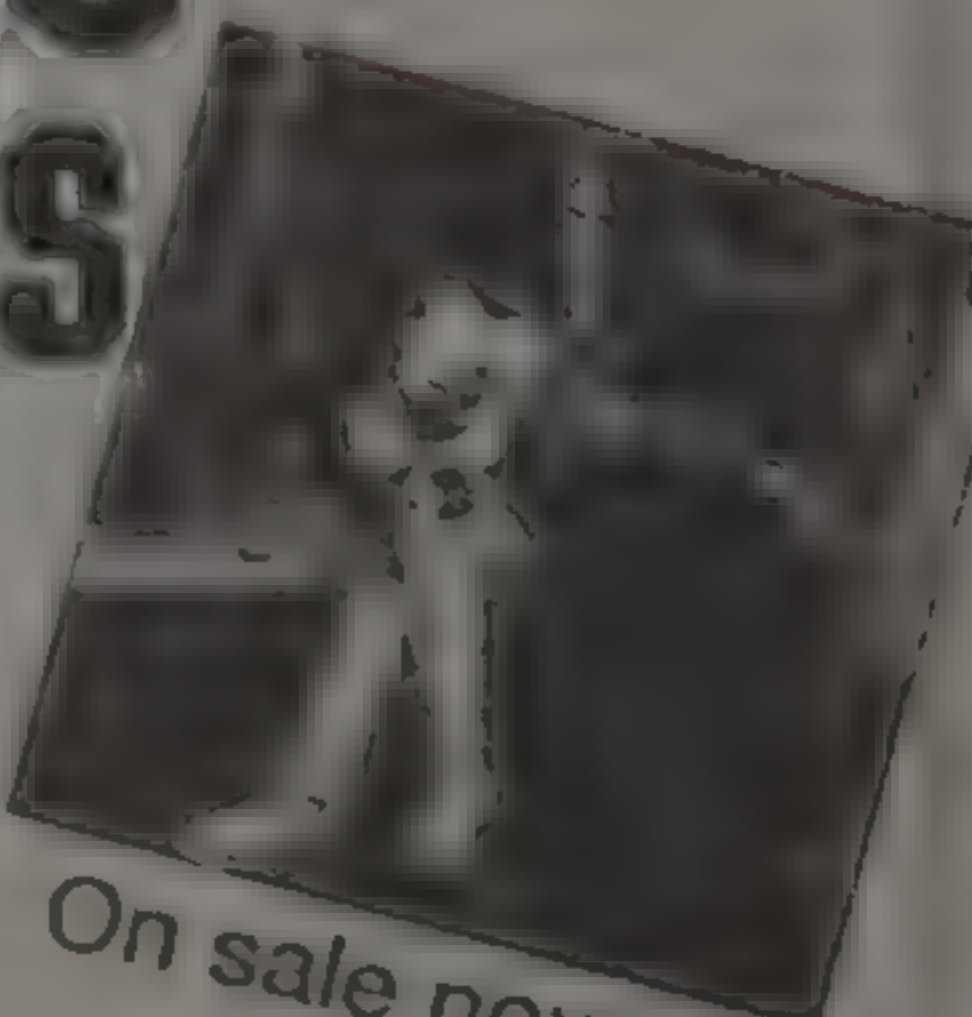
Your Music Destination

FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOV 25, 2004

1. Neko Case-The tigers have spoken (Mint)
2. Rammstein-Reise Reise (Universal)
3. Neil Young-Greatest Hits (Reprise)
4. Madeleine Peyroux-Careless Love (Rounder)
5. Tom Waits-Real gone (Anti)
6. Rufus Wainwright-Want two (Dreamworks)
7. Leonard Cohen-Dear Heather (Sony)
8. Elliot Smith-From a basement on the hill (Anti)
9. Ben Harper & the Blind boys of Alabama-  
There will be a light (Virgin)
10. V/A-Give 'em the boot IV (Hellcat)
11. Aimme Mann-Live at St. Ann's Warehouse (Superego)
12. Tegan and Sara-So Jealous (Superclose)
13. OST-Ray (Warner)
14. K.D. Lang - Hymns Of The 49th Parallel (nonesuch)
15. Social Distortion-Sex, love & rock 'n' roll (time bomb)
16. Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds-  
Abattoir Blues/The Lyre of Orpheus (Mute)
17. Blues Explosion-Damage (Sanctuary)
18. A Perfect Circle-eMOTIVE (Virgin)
19. Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodriguez-  
Angel of the morning (TMG)
20. J.J. Cale -To Tulsa and Back (santuary)
21. Pearl Jam-Rearview mirror (Sony)
22. Interpol-Antics (Matador)
23. Bjork-Medulla (Elektra)
24. Ray Charles-Genius loves company (Concord)
25. The Faint-Wet from birth (Saddle creek)
26. Mark Knopfler-Shangri-La (Mercury)
27. Pinback-Summer in Abaddon (Touch and Go)
28. Brian Wilson-Smile (Nonesuch)
29. Harry Manx-Road ragas (Dog my cat)
30. Cake-Pressure chief (Columbia)

## NEIL YOUNG GREATEST HITS

It may be hard to believe, but this 2004 best of package is not only the first retrospective Neil Young has released since 1977's Decade, it's the first ever single-disc collection of his best-known work. That's a span of 27 years separating the two collections, which is an awful long time to resist a Greatest Hits disc. With that said...buy it, Buffy would.



On sale now.

10355 Whyte Ave. Shop online at megatunes.com 434-6342

Fax your free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail them to [lists@vuwweekly.com](mailto:lists@vuwweekly.com). Deadline is Friday at 3pm.

### THU LIVE MUSIC

**ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL** Jimmy Whiffen

**BACKSTAGE TAP AND GRILL** Open stage jam; 8pm-12

**CARGO AND JAMES TEA SHOPPE** Open stage hosted by Ron Taylor; 7:30-10pm

**CASINO YELLOWHEAD** Looker (country/rock)

**FRANKIE'S RESTAURANT** Glover Trio; 4-7pm

**FRANKIE'S RESTAURANT** Open stage hosted by Alberta Crude; 6-10pm

**DRUID** Wynter Thursdays open stage

**DUSTER'S PUB** Jam hosted by Brian Petch

**EASTERN** (electronic); 8pm

**53 L'ATTITUDE** Dominismo (Latin jazz); 9-midnight

**FOUR ROOMS** Johanna Sillanpaa

**THE GRINDER** Open stage hosted by Rusty Reed; 9-midnight

**J AND R BAR AND GRILL** Open stage with the Poster Boys (pop/rock/blues); 8:30pm-12:30am

**NORTHLANDS** Sugakane; 5-midnight; \$10 (adv)/\$15 (door)

**REXALL PLACE** Yanni; 8pm; \$50-\$89.50; tickets available at TicketMaster 451-8000

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Matt Dusk; \$17.50 (adv)/\$20 (day of); tickets available at the Sidetrack; TicketMaster 451-8000

**URBAN LOUNGE** Ozzy Ozmunds; no cover

### CLASSICAL

**ALBERTA COLLEGE** Fall Festival Snapshot: Featuring performances by visiting guest artists and adjudicators for the Fall Music Festival; 8pm; \$15 (adult)/\$10 (student); tickets available in advance at TIX on the Square 420-1757

**CONVOCATION HALL** Rule Britannia. New Edmonton Wind Sinfonia; 8pm; \$10 (adult)/\$8 (student/senior); tickets available at TIX on the Square 420-1757

**CONTINENTAL HOTEL** Jerusalem Ridge; licensed, no smoking; 7pm (door), 8pm (show); \$8

**FATBOYZ** Sound Investment

**FESTIVAL PLACE** Heather Bishop (children); 2pm; \$16 (adult)/\$12 (child); theatre seating only; tickets available at Festival Place box office 449-3378, TicketMaster 451-8000

**FESTIVAL PLACE** Heather Bishop (Peggy Lee tribute); 6pm (dinner)/7:30pm (showtime); tickets: \$24 (cabaret)/\$22 (theatre seating); dinner and show: \$49 (cabaret seating)/\$47 (theatre seating); tickets available at Festival Place box office 449-3378, TicketMaster 451-8000

**FOUR ROOMS** Johanna Sillanpaa

**THE GRINDER** Open stage with Rusty Reed; 9-midnight

**J AND R BAR AND GRILL** Open stage with the Poster Boys (pop/rock/blues); 8:30pm-12:30am

**REXALL PLACE** Yanni; 8pm; \$50-\$89.50; tickets available at TicketMaster 451-8000

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Matt Dusk; \$17.50 (adv)/\$20 (day of); tickets available at the Sidetrack; TicketMaster 451-8000

**URBAN LOUNGE** Ozzy Ozmunds; no cover

**FILTHY McNASTY'S** Punk Rock Bingo with DJ S.W.A.G.

**GAS PUMP** Ladies Nite: Top 40/dance with DJ Christian

**GUILTY MARTINI** DJ Jeff

**LONGRIDERS** Hot Latin Nights; free dance lessons 8-9:30pm

**NEW CITY LUNAPLO** Rub-A-Dub Thursday: rocksteady, dub reggae with DJ Jeebus and the Operation Redication Sound System

**NEW CITY SUBURBS** Progress: electro/new wave with DJ Miss Mannered and guests; no minors

**POWER PLANT** Crush On Fridays: Top 40 with DJ Redpoint

**THE PUBLIK** GrassFire with DJ Elk Velvet, Because, The Kevin and Chris Show, Emma Hood; 9:30pm (door)

**RATTLESNAKE SALOON** DJ Butter

**RENDEZVOUS** Metal Night with DJ McNasty

**THE ROOST** Rotating shows: Sticky's open stage and the Weakest Link game with DJ Jazzy second and last Thursday; \$1 (member)/\$4 (non-member)

**SAVOY** Funk and downtempo with Ben Jamin

**SEEDY'S** DJ night

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Night Watch with Russell Gragg

**STOLLI'S ON WHYTE** Top 40 dance, R&B

**STOLLI'S ON WHYTE** Substance: hip hop/R&B end of exams jam with Spincycle Invinceable, J-Money, Sean B

**VICTORY LOUNGE** NRMLS WLCM: Electro synth pop hip hop with DJ Nik7 and DJ Dusty Grooves; 9pm

**YOUR APARTMENT** Jammers: open stage hosted by Katie; 8pm

### FRI LIVE MUSIC

**ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL** Jimmy Whiffen

**BACKSTAGE TAP AND GRILL** Dwayne Sparks Project, Trainwreck

**BOON** Mr. Lucky (blues/roots); 9:30pm-2am; no cover

**CASINO EDMONTON** Catalyst (Caribbean)

**CASINO YELLOWHEAD** Looker (country/rock)

**CHANCE RESTAURANT** Andrew Glover Trio; 4-7pm

**CONTINENTAL HOTEL** Jerusalem Ridge; licensed, no smoking; 7pm (door), 8pm (show); \$8

**FATBOYZ** Sound Investment

**FESTIVAL PLACE** Heather Bishop (children); 2pm; \$16 (adult)/\$12 (child); theatre seating only; tickets available at Festival Place box office 449-3378, TicketMaster 451-8000

**FESTIVAL PLACE** Heather Bishop (Peggy Lee tribute); 6pm (dinner)/7:30pm (showtime); tickets: \$24 (cabaret)/\$22 (theatre seating); dinner and show: \$49 (cabaret seating)/\$47 (theatre seating); tickets available at Festival Place box office 449-3378, TicketMaster 451-8000

**FOUR ROOMS** Johanna Sillanpaa

**THE GRINDER** Open stage with Rusty Reed; 9-midnight

**J AND R BAR AND GRILL** Open stage with the Poster Boys (pop/rock/blues); 8:30pm-12:30am

**REXALL PLACE** Yanni; 8pm; \$50-\$89.50; tickets available at TicketMaster 451-8000

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Matt Dusk; \$17.50 (adv)/\$20 (day of); tickets available at the Sidetrack; TicketMaster 451-8000

Club; 8pm; \$15 (adv)/\$17 (door); tickets available at TIX on the Square 420-1757, Southside Sound, 438-6410

**SEEDY'S** Road to Nowhere (CD release party), Panik Attack; \$6

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Shameless Records Showcase with The Dean Blyan Band, Trainsleeper, dual, Fosters and McGarvey; 8pm; \$6 (door)

**STOLLI'S ON WHYTE** Sand, Budd Pluggsdt and Tex-Ass Mikey (ex-smalls), Issues; no minors; 8pm; \$10; tickets available at the door

**URBAN LOUNGE** Ozzy Ozmunds; \$5

**WOODCROFT HALL** Open stage presented by the Uptown Folk Club; 7-7:30pm (sign-up); free (member)/\$4 (non-member)

**YOUNG LIVES** Sigismund Quintet; 8pm (door), 9pm (show); \$10 (member)/\$14 (non-member); tickets available at TicketMaster 451-8000

**ZENARI'S** Peter Hendrickson Trio

### CLASSICAL

**ALL SAINTS' ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL** The University of Alberta Madrigal Singers, Leonard Ratliff (conductor); 8pm; \$10 (student/senior)/\$15 (adult)

**CONVOCATION HALL** Piano Masterclass with Jaromir Klepac; 4-6pm; free; 492-8109, 492-0601

**FINE ARTS BUILDING** Strings Masterclasses with Kapralova String Quartet; 5-7pm; \$15

**STUDIO 27** Strings Masterclasses with Kapralova String Quartet; 5-7pm; \$15

**SUTTON PLACE HOTEL** Holiday Chestnuts Cabaret: Presented by Pro Coro Canada; 7pm; \$75; reservations required, phone 441-3032

**WINSPEAR CENTRE** Masters presented by the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, JoAnn Falletta (conductor), featuring Robert Silverman (piano); 8pm; \$21-\$56; tickets available at the Winspear Centre box office 428-1414

### DJS

**THE ARMOURY** Top 40/dance

**BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE** Big Mouth Entertainment

**BOOTS** Retro Disco: retro dance

**BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB** Top 40 with DJ Arrowchaser

**CAFÉ SELECT** Funk and downtempo with DJs Tryptomene and Slack

**CALIENTE NIGHTCLUB** Urban with Black Empeta, Invinceable, Q.B. and guests

**THE CIRCLE R** Top 40's with DJ Dwayne

**COWBOYS** Ladies Night: top 40

**CRISTAL LOUNGE** Affaire Illicite: industrial noise, neoclassical with Verlaag and Xerxes

**FRANKIE'S RESTAURANT** Powerhouse Fridays: dance and retro with Zack and Johnny Staub (Power 92); **Upstairs in the Skylounge**: soulful house with Ryan Wade and guests; over 23; dress code

**DEWEY'S** Outrageous Fridays: hip hop, urban with JSMILSZ

**DONNA** Silk: house with Winston Roberts and guests

**ELEPHANT AND CASTLE ON WHYTE** DJ Headspin Live

**ESCAPE ULTRA LOUNGE** Freedom Fridays: Top 40, R&B, retro with DJ Shocker

**FILTHY McNASTY'S** Shake Yo' Ass with DJ Senal K

**FOX PUB** Top 40 retro dance

Party; with DJ Loose Cannon

**THE JOINT** Fresh Fridays: Urban by Urban Metropolis Sound Crew

**KROBAR** Rock, metal, rock with DJ Matty; 9pm

**URBAN LOUNGE** Ozzy Ozmunds; \$5

**ORLANDO'S II PUB AND GRILL** Music with DJ V; 9pm

**POWER PLANT** Crush On Fridays: Top 40 with DJ Redpoint

**RATTLESNAKE SALOON** DJ Butter

**THE ROOST** Upstairs: Euro Blitz: best new European music with DJ Outlaw Downstairs: DJ Jazzy; \$4 (member)/\$6 (non-member)

**ROXY ON WHYTE** Babylon Fridays: retro/R&B/dance with DJ Extreme

**SIDETRACK CAFE** The Jay and Jay Show with Jay Hannley and Smilin' Jay Willis

**THE STANDARD** Triple X Fridays: Top 40/dance

**STOLLI'S ON WHYTE** Top 40 dance, R&B

**STONEHOUSE PUB** Alternative, house, hip hop, top 40 with DJ Rage and DJ Weezle; 9pm

**VICTORY LOUNGE** Vindictive Metal Fridays with Vindictive Bastard

**Y AFTERHOURS** House/breakbeat with Tripswitch, Sureshock, MC Flopro, LP, Juicy, Dragon, Old Bitch; 18+

**YOUR APARTMENT** House with DJ Tomek

### SAT LIVE MUSIC

**ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL** Jimmy Whiffen

**BACKDRAUGHT PUB** McCuaig; \$5; 9:30pm

**BACKSTAGE TAP AND GRILL** Dwayne Sparks Project, Trainwreck

**BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE** Hair of the Dog: John Guliak; 4-6pm; no cover

**BO'S BAR AND GRILL** Eddie Simon and the Fearless featuring Duns Maxwell (Powder Blues Band) and Jerry Doucette; 9pm

**BUD'S LOUNGE** Open jam with Lorne Burnstick; 7:30-11:30pm

**CASINO EDMONTON** Catalyst (Caribbean)

**CASINO YELLOWHEAD** Looker (country/rock)

**CONTINENTAL HOTEL** Jerusalem Ridge; licensed, no smoking; 7pm (door), 8pm (show); \$8

**DRUID** Harpdog Brown and the Bloodhounds; 4-7pm

**FESTIVAL PLACE** Jane Siberry (electic folk); 7:30pm; \$24 (cabaret)/\$22 (theatre); tickets available at Festival Place box office 449-3378, TicketMaster 451-8000

**FIDDLER'S ROOST** Accordians in concert featuring Norman Rice, Alex Maduck, Patrick Carroll, Austin Kawa, Johnny Buttons, Leonid Savitsovich with guests Errol Lazaro, Jess Lee and Born in the North; \$12 (adv)/\$15 (door); 8pm; 908-0098/439-9788

**FOUR ROOMS** Johanna Sillanpaa

**GOLDEN HARVEST MINISTRIES CHURCH** Christmas Dinner and Gospel Program with Joanne Vandergrift, Juanita Fass and others; \$20/\$25 (for two)

**THE GRINDER** Q&D

**J.J'S L.D.K.** (rock)

**JEFFREYS CAFE AND WINE** BAR Bruce and Lori Mol (jazz); 7:30pm; \$5

**JOHN L. HAAR THEATRE** Blvd (a cappella); 7:30pm (adv)/\$15 (door); ticket available at TIX on the Square 420-1757

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE STUDENT ASSOCIATION CENTRE** Ann Vriend and the Dropouts (R&B, soul and jazz); 7:30pm; \$8; tickets available at TIX on the Square 420-1757

**MULTICULTURAL HERITAGE CENTRE** Jenn Poburan (contemporary Chnstian); 2-3pm free

**THE NEST** Out of Your Mouth: Deep Fine Grnd, Split Tract; \$1 (adv); tickets available at NA office, The Nest

**O'BYRNE'S** Chns Wynters and Scott Peters; 3-6pm

**POWER PLANT** Texas Blues Money, The Mark Birtles Trio, Teenage Soul Invasion; 8pm (door); \$6 (HUACA member, \$6 (non-member)

**RED'S** China White; 8pm (door); \$10pm (show); no minors; \$4

**REMEDY CAFE** Mariko (electronic); 9pm

**RENDEZVOUS** Of Demented Profunda Rose, guest

**SEEDY'S** Fij, Manhattan Jack

**SIDETRACK CAFE** The Mahones, Grckl, Nathan Roger; 8pm; \$8 (door)

**STARLITE ROOM** Vanessa Carlton, Low Millions; 8pm (door); \$17.50; tickets available at TicketMaster 451-8000

**WINSPEAR CENTRE** REHEARSAL HALL Bryce K... (CD fundraiser); 8pm (show); 7pm (door); \$20; tickets available at TIX on Square 420-1757

**WINSPEAR CENTRE** Thompson, Dino Dominelli Quartet; 8pm (door), 9pm (show); \$10 (member)/\$14 (non-member); tickets available at TicketMaster 451-8000

### CLASSICAL

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### DJS

**THE ARMOURY** Top 40, dance

**BACKDRAUGHT PUB** McCuaig; \$5; 9:30pm

**BO'S BAR AND GRILL** Eddie Simon and the Fearless featuring Duns Maxwell (Powder Blues Band) and Jerry Doucette; 9pm

**BUD'S LOUNGE** Open jam with Lorne Burnstick; 7:30-11:30pm

**CASINO EDMONTON** Catalyst (Caribbean)

**CASINO YELLOWHEAD** Looker (country/rock)

**CONTINENTAL HOTEL** Jerusalem Ridge; licensed, no smoking; 7pm (door), 8pm (show); \$8

**DRUID** Harpdog Brown and the Bloodhounds; 4-7pm

**FESTIVAL PLACE** Jane Siberry (electic folk); 7:30pm; \$24 (cabaret)/\$22 (theatre); tickets available at Festival Place box office 449-3378, TicketMaster 451-8000

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**FOUR ROOMS** Johanna Sillanpaa

**GOLDEN HARVEST MINISTRIES CHURCH** Christmas Dinner and Gospel Program with Joanne Vandergrift, Juanita Fass and others; \$20/\$25 (for two)

**THE GRINDER** Q&D

**J.J'S L.D.K.** (rock)



**CURTY MARTINI** Housegroove  
Sundays, 4-10pm

**IRON HORSE** Urban dance party  
4-10pm

**THE JOINT** Get a Night to Top  
man

**REBAR** Punk, metal, rock with  
DJ

**MELTING POT** Lo-Fi (tribal)  
10pm-12am

**NEWCASTLE PUB AND GRILL**  
7-10pm

**NEW CITY SUBURBS** Saturdays  
8-11pm

**ORLANDO'S B PUB AND GRILL** Music with DJ V, 9pm

**RATT (ROOM AT THE TOP)**  
9-11pm

**WILFENHARE SALOON** DJ

**THE ROOST** Upstairs: Monthly  
DJ; Downstairs: Retro  
music with DJ Dan and Mike; \$4  
(member)/\$6 (non-member)

**TOXY ON WHYTE** Session  
Saturdays; dance/R&B, hip hop  
with DJ Extreme

**SAVOY** Deep house with  
Winston Roberts

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Night Watch:  
Rock/roots/reggae with Mick

**STOLLI'S ON WHYTE** Top 40  
DJ

**STONEHOUSE PUB** Top 40 with  
DJ Clay

**TONIC AFTER DARK**  
Uncensored Saturdays: R&B, hip  
hop, old school with Urban  
Metropolis Sound Crew

**TWILIGHT AFTERHOUSE**  
House/trance with Eric Field,  
Travis Mateeson, DJ Kibon,  
Amarieus Ruff, Crunchie, Big  
Daddy, STX, Jeff Hills, Gryffin; 18+

**VICTORY LOUNGE** I Am Domo  
Sundays: Indie classics with  
Mittens and Bob Crane

**Y AFTERHOURS** House/trance  
with Donovan, Juicy, Ryan Wade,  
Luke Morrison, Anthony  
Donohue, Erin Eden; 18+

**YOUR APARTMENT** Hip hop,  
R&B, old school with JMK and  
guests

## SUN

### LIVE MUSIC

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

**RECLAM LIVE Alternative Jazz**  
Sundays, hosted by Ruben de  
Toledo (bassist) and guests; no  
cover

**BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL**  
Sunday jam with Carmen Cook

**CARGO AND JAMES TEA**  
**SHOPPE** Open stage with Bob  
Robichaud; 7-10pm

**ECCO PUB** Open jam session  
hosted by Imaginary Friend  
(blues, roots); 4-8pm

**FOX PUB** 17 Against the Dealer,  
Tropwire, Lefttuff; 7pm (door); 9  
(bands); DJ at midnight; \$3

**O'BRYNE'S** Joe Bird's live jam;  
9-10pm

**QUEEN ALEXANDRA HALL**  
Scarlett, Washington and  
Whiteley (folk, blues, and swing)  
presented by Maple Tree Music;  
7pm (door), 8pm (show); \$15  
(adv)/\$17 (door); tickets available  
at Acoustic Music Shop, Myhre's  
Music, TIX on the Square 420-  
1757

**ROSEBOWL** Jam with Mike  
McDonald; 10pm

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Under the  
Covers Sundays: DJ Dudeman,  
Disgrace the Retroman, Supemai;  
8-10pm; \$6

**YARDBIRD SUITE** Dave Young  
Quartet; 7-10pm (door), 8pm  
(show); \$14 (member)/\$18  
(non-member); tickets available  
at TicketMaster 451-8000

## CLASSICAL

**CONVOCAION HALL** The  
University of Alberta Academy  
Stings and Orchestral Winds,  
Tanya Prochazka (conductor);  
8pm; \$10 (student/senior)/\$15  
(adult)

**CONVOCAION HALL** Jorge  
Luis Prats (piano); Cuba  
Hurncane Relief benefit concert;  
2-3pm; \$20 (donation, door);  
488-0942

**CHURCH A Choral Concert**  
featuring the Knox-Met Choir  
and Chancel Bell Ringers; benefit  
for the Afghan Well Project; 2pm;  
\$10 (door)

**WINSPEAR CENTRE** Davis  
Sunday Showcase: presented by  
the Edmonton Symphony  
Orchestra, JoAnn Falletta  
(conductor), featuring Ian Parker  
(piano); 2pm; \$21-\$46; tickets  
available at the Winspear Centre  
box office 428-1414

## DJS

**BALENTINE NIGHTCLUB**  
Night: urban with DJ Invinceable

**MANHATTAN CLUB** Industry  
Sundays: top 40, dance/R&B

**NEW CITY LIKWIID LOUNGE**  
Chocolate Sundays: DJs Remo,  
Cool Hand Luc, Push, Marco

**THE ROOST** Betty Ford  
Hangover Clinic Show Beer Bash:  
every long weekend with DJ  
Jazzy; \$7

**SAVOY** French Pop mixed with  
Deja DJ

**STOLLI'S ON WHYTE** Somatic  
Sunday: progressive beats with  
DJ Eighties, DJ Diekt, guests

**VICTORY LOUNGE** Set Hip  
Art on skateboards show: punk  
rock, hip hop, classics with DJ  
Sipped Disc

## MON

### LIVE MUSIC

**LB'S PUB** Open stage with  
Randy Martin; 9pm-2am

**SECOND CUP (CHURCHILL**  
**SQUARE)** Open mic every Mon  
with Rob Taylor and Ben Todd;  
7-10pm

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Open stage  
Mondays with host Ben Spencer;  
9pm; no cover

## CLASSICAL

**WINSPEAR CENTRE** A Festival of  
Nine Lessons and Carols: The  
University of Alberta Mixed  
Chorus, the Faculty of Education  
Handbell Ringers with organists,  
Robert de Free (conductor);  
7-10pm; 428-1414

## DJS

**BLACKDOG FREEHOUSE** DJ  
Penntentary

**DUSTER'S PUB** DJ Dan

**FILTHY MCNASTY'S** Metal  
Mondays with DJ S.W.A.G.

**O'BRYNE'S** Hip Mondays  
Industry night with DJ Finnegan,  
live music

**STOLLI'S ON WHYTE** Manic  
Monday: Old skool, R&B, hip  
hop with Harman B and DJ  
Kwake

## TUE

### LIVE MUSIC

**BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL**  
Open jam with Mark Ammar

**DRUID** Open stage with Chris  
Winters

**LEGENDS PUB** Open jam  
hosted by Gary Thomas

**THE NEST** Open mic with Ben  
Spencer; 4:30-6:30pm

**O'BRYNE'S** Celtic night with  
Shannon Johnson and friends;  
9-10pm

**PEPPERS** Open stage hosted by  
the Darryl Meyer Quartet (R&B,  
blues, jazz)

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Will Previle  
(CD release party), Chris  
Winters; 8pm; \$6 (door)

**URBAN LOUNGE** Salsa and the  
City: X-Band, 9pm; Salsa dance  
lessons, 8pm; \$5 (door)

**YARDBIRD SUITE** Tuesday Jam  
Sessions: Tom Gilroy Combo,  
8pm (door), 9pm (show); \$3

## DJS

**BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE** Karaoke  
and DJ Tues with Run Riot  
Professional Music Productions

**BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE** Vava  
with DJ Sean

**BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB** Top 40  
with DJ Stephan

**CALIENTE NIGHTCLUB**  
Basement Tuesdays: hip  
hop/R&B/reggae/dancehall with  
Bomb Squad, DJ Invinceable,  
Q B

**DECADANCE** Too Cool for  
Tuesdays: Ambient, Trip hop, goa  
and glitch with Galatea,  
bitstream and guests

**DUSTER'S PUB** DJ "Name a  
Tune" Dan

**FILTHY MCNASTY'S** Twisted  
Trina with DJ Whit-Ford

**NEW CITY LIKWIID**  
Resurrection: industrial/EBM/elec  
tro/goth with Nik Roleelya

**THE ROOST** Flamingo Bingo  
with DJ Janny; 8-midnight; \$1  
(member)/\$4 (non-member)

**SEEDY'S** Tuesday Nights with DJ  
Miss Mannered

**SIDETRACK CAFE** Night Watch  
with DJ Whitey Houston (Lyle  
Bell)

**VICTORY LOUNGE** Random  
with DJ Eli

## WED

### LIVE MUSIC

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GRILL

Open mic; 8pm

**BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL**  
Wednesday night jams hosted by  
Randy J. Martin and Danita Lynn;  
7-11pm

**CANADIAN LEGION** Open  
stage hosted by Dino Dominelli  
Hot Fire, 9-midnight; no cover

**FESTIVAL PLACE** A Celtic  
Christmas: Barra MacNeils;  
7-10pm; \$25 (cabaret); \$23  
(theatre); tickets available at  
Festival Place box office 449-  
3378, TicketMaster 451-8000

**O'BRYNE'S** Chris Winters and  
Trends; 9-10pm

**PLEASANTVIEW HALL**  
Northern Bluegrass Circle Music  
Society bluegrass jam; 7-10pm

**ROSSDALE COMMUNITY**  
HALL Little Flower open stage  
hosted by Brian Greigg; 8pm

**SIDETRACK CAFE** radioforhelp  
Just Drive, Illit Outfit; 8pm; \$6  
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Glitter Gulch with DJ Buster  
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**FILTHY MCNASTY'S** Mix Tape  
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**LE GLOBE** DJ Moreno

**GUILTY MARTINI** DJ Sunny

**NEW CITY LIKWIID LOUNGE**  
New City Dolls: Glam, punk,  
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bpm

By DAVID STONE

## No more Mixers?

The last time I saw **Christopher Lawrence**, we were both up to our ankles in mud and horse crap, looking around at the rainout of what would turn out to be the very last Nexus Gathering. It was another attempt at throwing an outdoor party, but fate conspired against everyone involved, hence America's leading trance DJ and myself, pondering our soggy predicament.

But Lawrence remained upbeat. When he got up to the decks, he beamed at his brave audience, who rode his groove amid gopher holes and cold rain. That attitude—not to mention a killer taste for driving anthems—is probably what has kept him at the top of the pile in a fickle industry.

So it's going to be nice to see him play this Friday at Chase as a guest of United's Mixer club night, and it's going to be an absolute pleasure for me to warm up the room before he gets on. Lawrence is coming to town riding a wave of acclaim—he's got two hot new albums in stores, *All or Nothing* and *Unhooked: The Hook Sessions*, a retrospective of his productions released through his Hook label. He's also produced a dark charmer of a track with U.K. figurehead John 00 Flemming called "Attention," and recently scored a top-10 slot on the latest *DJ* magazine Top 100 readers' poll, right up there with Tiësto and

Paul Van Dyk.

What's sad, though, is the fact that this stormer of a party is the last regular Mixer night United is planning on presenting for some time. Better known as event promoters, United took a chance by throwing their energy behind a weekly club night, and considering the success they've had with major bashes, Mixer seemed destined to score big. What with United's pedigree and the fact that people were getting a true progressive dance music night in a slick venue on a Friday night, it should have worked.

Truth is, United may have become a victim of its own success. Look at what they've pulled off in the past few months: Benny Benassi, DJ Dan, Bad Boy Bill, Lisa Lashes, Paul Oakenfold. Great parties at great clubs, people coming out in droves, but I think the energy it took to drive those events over the line came at the expense of their weekly. There wasn't much left in

the tank, so to speak. It's sad to see it end, but United appears unwilling to walk away from ever doing another weekly. That's encouraging. So the fact that Mixer is going out in style, with a raging afterparty at Twilight with **DJ Micro**.

Connected Entertainment stared at the same problem when they ran their Spin Thursdays at the Standard. The guys fought an uphill battle to establish a consistent big room house night, but it only seemed to work out when a major headliner was flown in. Mind you, a solid lineup came through the door: David Morales, Roger Sanchez, Felix Da Housecat, Erick Morillo. We would have never seen anything like that in Edmonton had the Standard never given the Connected team a break, and thank goodness they did.

How to get people into the clubs, no matter how good the resident talent is, is never easy to figure out.

Check out that new reality show *The Club*, and you'll notice that the challenge isn't alien to promoters working in a party town like Las Vegas. One week, thousands are going nuts to Donald Glaude and DJ Dan, and the next week you can hear the tumble weeds skip across the room.

It's hard to remain upbeat in such a skittish business, but both United and Connected—not to mention smaller companies like Phoenix, who are presenting adventurous **DJ Lorin** tonight (Thursday) at Decadance—keep plunging into the fray. In fact, the two groups have teamed up to present rising U.K. progressive star **James Zabiela** at Bar None on December 2. And there are new club nights cropping up too, like Static Saturdays with LP and Tomek over at Decadance—who are presenting. There's also a reason to keep going no matter how high the mud gets, because people will always find a reason to party. ☺



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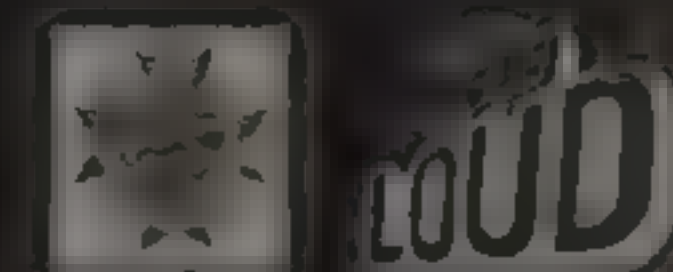
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## distant replay

By STEVEN SANDOR

**THIS WEEK:** Mike Thordarson of the Phi Effect discusses the Corb Lund Band's *Five Dollar Bill*

So far, when Distant Replay has asked musicians to name the album that made them want to take up playing in a band full-time, their reasons behind their selection have been limited to the music itself and how it inspired them.

That changes with this week's installment. Of course, no one would argue that *Five Dollar Bill* from Corb Lund—Edmonton's current king of country songwriters—isn't a heck of a record. Hell, it's one of the reasons that Lund is now getting more attention now from music fans outside of Edmonton than when he was part of the Smalls, the city's legendary rockers. But the

fact that *Five Dollar Bill* is a great musical effort isn't the only reason why Mike Thordarson of Edmonton's the Phi Effect wanted to play guitar; Thordarson also feels the album symbolizes how a musician can adapt and persevere throughout their career.

"Corb had been in the Smalls for many years, many tours and many albums, but they never really 'broke,'" Thordarson says. "They were popular in western Canada and mildly popular in eastern Canada, but never really took off. Then the Smalls ended and he kept pluggin' and eventually put out *Five Dollar Bill*. The album is great, and Corb really is living his life as a musician."

*Five Dollar Bill* was released in 2002 on Stony Plain Records, a deal that gave Lund and his band the chance to get their music distributed to a wider audience after a couple of independently released albums, and it's certainly one of this new century's more noteworthy albums by a local artist. With an all-acoustic approach and a dedication to honest songwriting, the album is down-home without ever pandering to any of those dreaded new-country fads. *Five Dollar Bill* establishes Lund as a great musical storyteller; the characters in tracks like



"Roughest Neck Around" and "Bucking Horse Rider" are as captivating as any you'd encounter in a good prairie ghost story told around a campfire. And the chilling "Apocalyptic Modified Blues" is Lund's very western take on the Book of Revelation.

The album was good enough to be nominated for a Juno, and Lund has made inroads into the American music

scene, picking up quite a following for himself in the musical hotbed of Austin, Texas. The album was even picked up by England-based Loose Music.

While Thordarson has been inspired by Lund, he'll soon be making music in a new band after the Phi Effect will be plays their farewell show December 4 at the Victory Lounge. "Three quarters of the Phi Effect,

including myself, will be debuting a new band on the same night," Thordarson explains.

Even though the Phi Effect is wrapping things up, fans can still nab a copy of the band's new *Our Motion Through Her Eyes* album, which is filled with all sorts of indie-rock goodness, through the band's website at [www.thephi effect.com](http://www.thephi effect.com).

WEDNESDAY | DEC. 8, 2004



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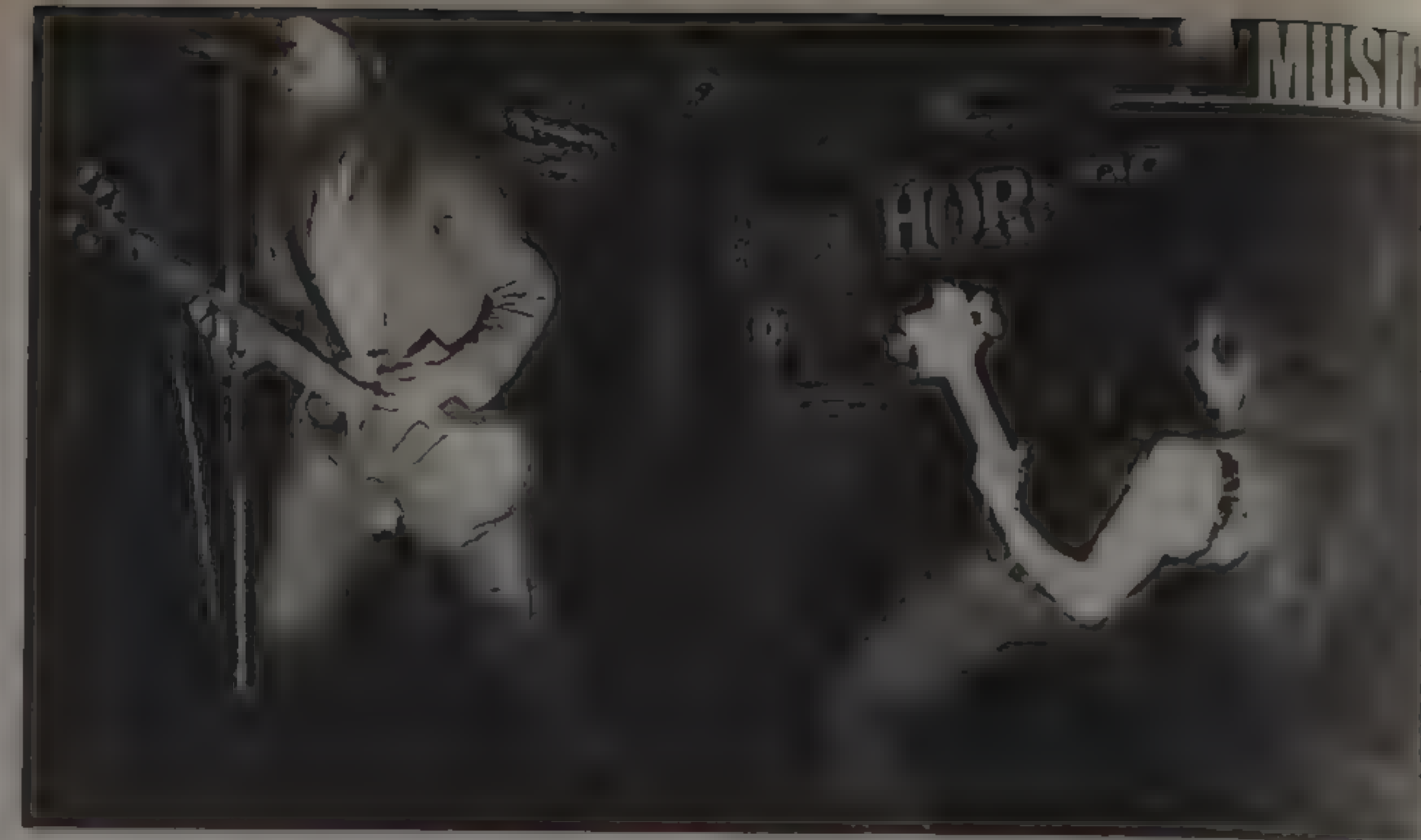
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## I want to live like C'mon people

Ian Blurton exhorts  
rock fans to new  
heights with his latest  
hard-touring band

BY PHIL DUPERRON

Ian Blurton, the man behind Toronto rock juggernaut C'mon, is a man of few words. Unlike most musicians, who seem only too willing to wax poetic about nearly anything, Blurton speaks matter-of-factly, even with a hint of understatement. But when a man who's played in as many wicked bands as Blurton has (Change of Heart, Blurtonia and, most recently, Bionic) decides to say something,

it carries a lot of weight and people tend to listen. Maybe that's why so many bands have looked to his discerning ear as a producer to get the most out of their own records. He's produced recent discs by everyone from the Lowest of the Low to the Dayglo Abortions, but as he points out, "That was last year." Now it's time for C'mon to shake things up by bringing their no-nonsense rock to the people.

"C'mon is just bringing it on," Blurton says. "That's all we do. We've done about 100 shows this year so far."

C'mon got its start while Blurton and his bass-playing girlfriend Katie Lynn Campbell (formerly of Nashville Pussy) were on holiday in Paris, staying in a neighbourhood famous for its artistic residents. "We were just walking around on those streets, getting really inspired by art and that concept of living, and we decided to start a band," he explains. "We went to a bunch of different galleries, we got dressed up and we were looking at different paintings and being inspired by them. We'd see a good painting and be talking about the band at the same time and say, 'Okay, we want some Alice Cooper or some ZZ Top' while we were looking at Picasso or Dali or whatever."

and long, unruly hair, Blurton looks like the kind of guy who you'd be more likely to find swilling pin's in a shady hotel saloon to the sound of gritty rock music than studying fine art, but he balks at the thought that high art and rock 'n' roll would make strange bedfellows. "I don't know—you think so?" he asks. For him, life and music are all about the moment. It doesn't matter when or where inspiration strikes, as long as you're there with your eyes and ears wide open. It was with that attitude in mind that Blurton, Campbell and drummer Randy Curnew got together for only a handful of practice sessions before going into the studio to record *Midnight Is the Answer*. Then, armed with 500 copies pressed on goldenrod vinyl

and a special limited-run EP to tide them over until the full-length disc hit the streets, C'mon blitzed across the country in September. Now, with *Midnight Is the Answer* on the shelves in Canada they're coming back to solidify their hold on rockers across the nation.

For most bands, the idea of crossing the country before their record is even in the stores would be foolish. But C'mon isn't most bands, and for the 400 or so people who crammed into New City to see them play the last time, that's a very good thing. "So many people wait to create," Blurton observes. "They wait for the buzz to happen, and it's just so much easier to go out there and play and create it yourself, y'know? I mean, if people don't like you they're not going to come back."

Since a veritable army of fans have been seen sporting their shirts since they were in town rocking the house, Blurton doesn't worry about not getting any repeat business. In fact, that aura of expectation is something C'mon is only too willing and able to deliver on. "You see," Blurton says, "now we have a responsibility to those people to rock and be the best we can—and give 110 per cent." ☐

WITH HIS THICK, grizzled beard

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# Roll out the Carole

Tom Jackson's Food Bank fundraiser restores music lovers' Christmas spirit

By HEATHER ADLER

Middle-aged men with fake beards, Santa suits and breath that smells of whiskey, malls filled with crying babies and Wal-Marts stacked with shelves full of novelty items: these are just a few of the sights we've come to expect (and dread) around the holiday season. Somewhere amid the office party antics and mistletoe mishaps, many of us have forgotten what the spirit of Christmas is really about. But Tom Jackson and his guests—country artist Aaron Pritchett, jazz crooner Andrea Menard, folk-rockers Lunch at Allen's and Celtic popsters Mad Violet—have not, and they're stopping by Edmonton this week to give us a friendly reminder that this season is really about giving, and hopefully do a little good for Canada's less fortunate along the way.

The Huron Carole, which got its start back in 1987, is a yearly Canadi-

an tour that takes a new line-up of northern musicians across the country to raise funds for the Food Bank. The production, which is currently being hosted by Jackson, is among the longest-running tours in Canadian history and, over the years, it's become one of the Canadian Association of Food Banks' largest income generators. "The amount we raise has varied over the years," says Jackson, "but I'd wager to say we've raised over three million dollars to date in cash. If you were to do the calculations on the

## PREVIEW FUNDRAISER

food donations and cash, and what the multiples are for what the Food Bank can do to mobilize food, that equates up to maybe six million dollars." The tour raises money from ticket sales and also encourages audience members to bring along a bag of non-perishables for donation.

JACKSON MADE A NAME for himself as an actor on the CBC television series *North of 60* and as a singer/songwriter with no fewer than 12 albums to his credit, two of which received Juno nominations. But before his career took off, Jackson was living the same lifestyle as

those he now crusades to help; at 15 he dropped out of school and spent the next seven years of his life on the streets of Winnipeg. "It didn't necessarily lead me into this work," he explains, "but what it did was give me a greater awareness of the kinds of things that people who are in fact living on the street go through. It allows me to have a bond with those people whether I'm hands-on or the secondhand away."

These days, Jackson continues to dedicate much of his time to various charitable organizations and says he hopes the spirit of giving embodied by the artists and team behind the Huron Carole becomes contagious. "I hope that the Huron Carole and its history have made people aware of what it is they are coming to be a part of," he says, "and that in fact, is to be part of a gift. As those who are more fortunate, we can use the production as a connection to people who we may never see but who we know, at the end of the day, aren't just getting a sandwich—they are getting the feeling that somebody cares about them and, I dare say, loves them." ☺

### THE HURON CAROLE

With Tom Jackson, Aaron Pritchett, Andrea Menard, Lunch at Allen's and Mad Violet • Winspear Centre • Thu, Nov 25

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## Rufus Wainwright Hawksley Workman

Rufus Wainwright is set

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The new album *Want One*

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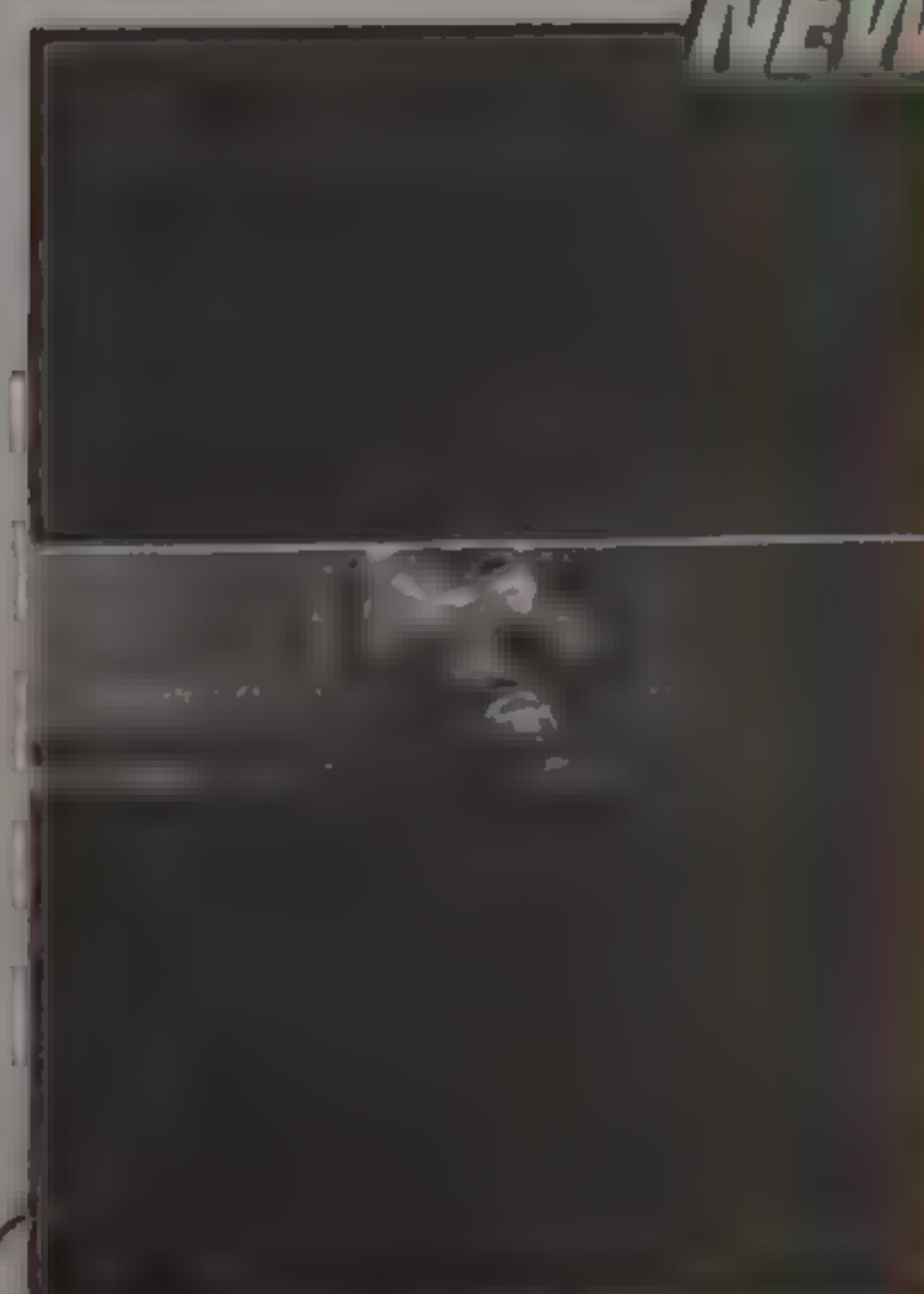
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original bands in Toronto, but I grew up in the Prairies, and I understand how hard it is to build up resources and get your product together in a highly competitive market. I admire these guys for getting their stuff together and taking a shot at it.

"I haven't even heard all of these bands," he continues. "They sent some bits to me and asked me to listen to it, but it doesn't really matter what the music sounds like to me. What matters is they are writing their own songs, they have records coming out and they are doing videos—they get my thumbs-up for that. I'll fly up north in the freezing cold to be a part of that—and believe me, if I'm coming up to do this I must really want to do this."

With enough determination and guts, Johnson says any band, even one from desolate Edmonton, can make it in show business. But as an industry

veteran, he does have one piece of advice for all the up-and-comers who will be showing off their stuff this week. "Strive for originality," he says. "It's very tempting to conform; people strive very hard to sound like other things that are popular, but sometimes by the time you get your stuff together, that trend has gone and you're standing there with yesterday's fashion."

"Video, like audio, is often homogenous and there are a lot of bands whose visual presentation looks just like everyone else's," he adds. "People are going out getting all sorts of stuff stuck in their head, lip and nose, and maybe at one point that was meant to make you look more unique, but these days it just makes you look more similar. There are other ways of making yourself unique and setting yourself apart. Be bold. Be original." ☐

THE VERGE

With Gordie Johnson, Sugakane, Jay Murphy Band, King Ring Nancy, Politic Live and Tupelo Honey • Winspear Centre • Wed, Dec 1

MUSIC

# Cornering the Marxists

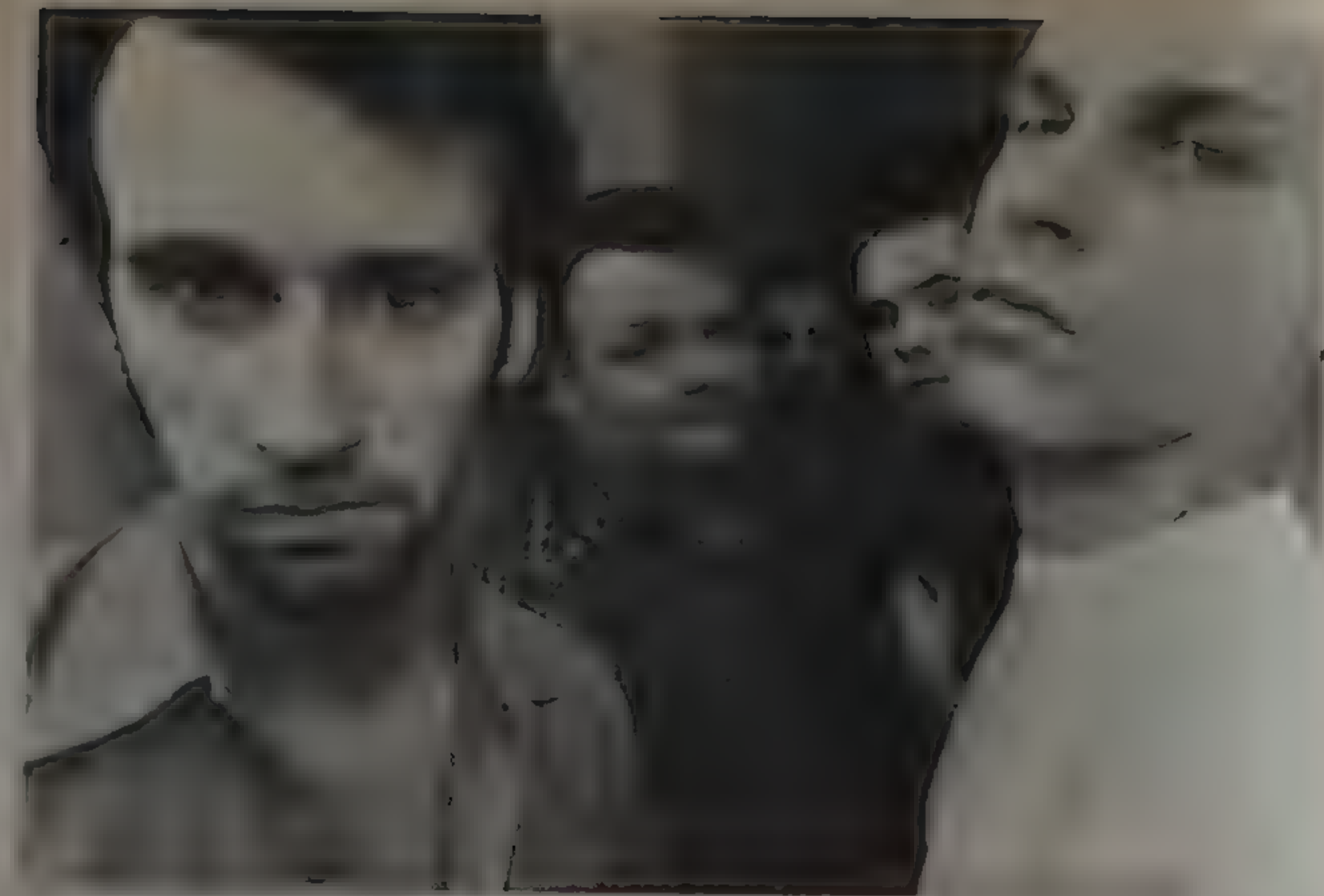
The Million Dollar Marxists hope to cash in on their deal with Gearhead

By MIKE LAROCQUE

"We might be left-leaning, but we're not Marxists," laughs Million Dollar Marxists frontman Luke Nuclear.

They may not be commanding communist armies or raking in seven-figure salaries yet, either. But misleading name aside, this Ottawa fivesome has thrown off the shackles of being a small-time band and attracted serious buzz at home and south of the border. Nuclear, along with his oddly-named cohorts Johnny Genome, Timmy Two Times, U. Lee Mobile and Steve Salmonella, have signed with San Francisco-based label Gearhead—the same outfit that called first dibs on the Hellacopters, New Bomb Turks and the Hives. Having pressed only 600 copies of their EP and toured only briefly in Canada, Nuclear admits it took a stroke of good fortune—and some helpful friends—to land them their big break.

"It was kind of a surprise when [Gearhead] first contacted us," Nuclear says. "We didn't have any dis-



tribution and hadn't sold many records, so I think it's just one of those things where we got really lucky." The band had sent their EP to the label's magazine in hopes of getting it reviewed; to their surprise, they got a record contract instead. "Our friend Dirty Donny does artwork for Gearhead and he had no small part getting us signed," Nuclear says. "He's never said so, but I suspect that he hyped us up quite a bit and told them that we were hard-working."

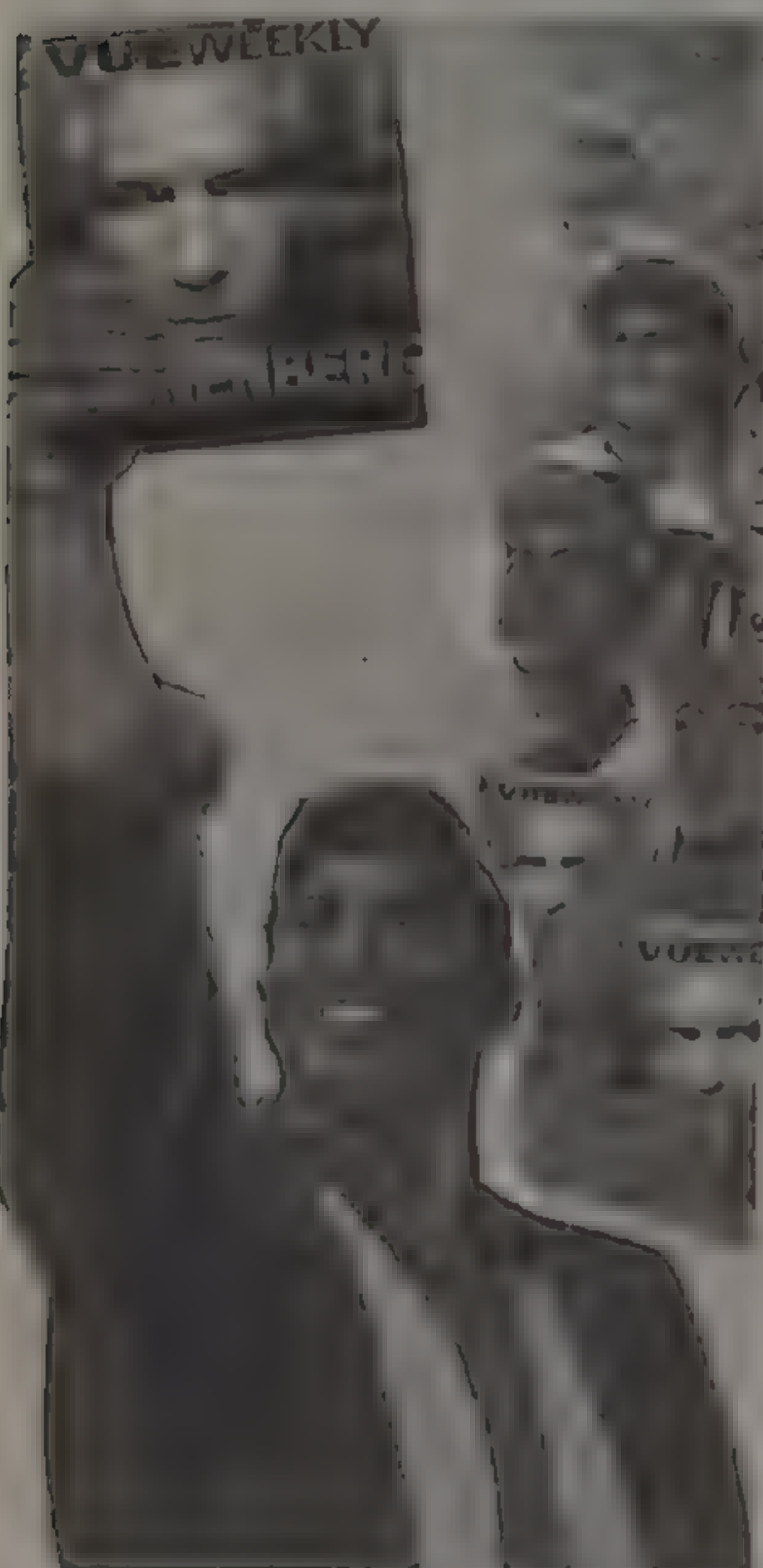
THE BAND RELEASED their first full-length album, *Give It a Name*, last September and their fast-paced, teetering-on-the-edge-of-punk rock

decided that if we were going to do this, we were going to put everything we had into it, and if that means taking off six months and seeing what happens, that's what we're going to do. We might be thousands of dollars in debt at the end of it, but we've got the rest of our lives to get out. We might as well get out there and do our best to sell some records and get people to come and see us."

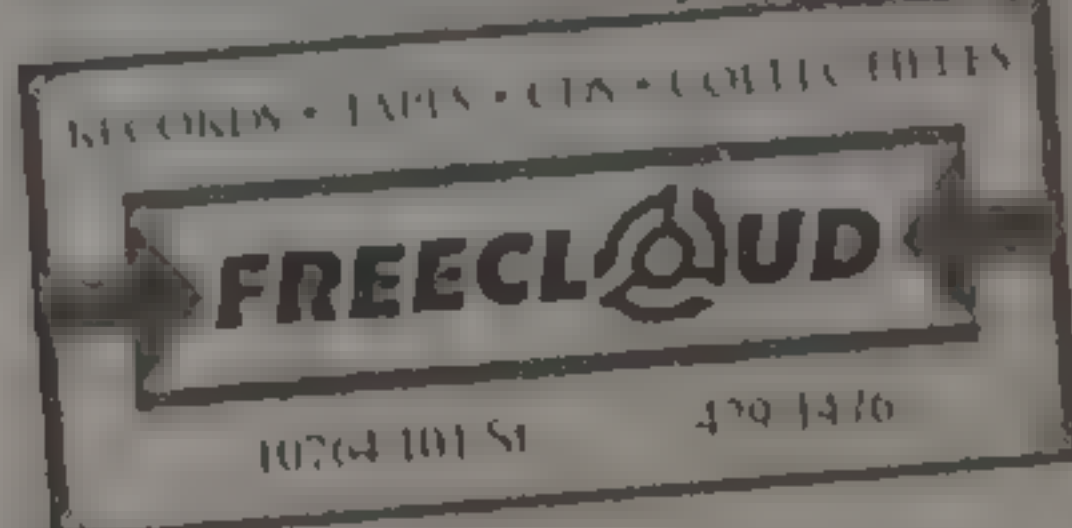
And the Marxists are determined not to let their lucky break define their music. To hear Nuclear tell it, legitimacy and credibility, not rock stardom, are their main goals. "I think that there is glut of mediocre bands [out there]," he laments. "That's probably how it's always been, but people have more access to them now, so people are certainly going to be a little choosier about whom they like. The world that we live in is so conformist in so many ways that the chances of someone doing something new or original is much lower. I hear new music all the time that I get excited about, but my attention span for it isn't what it used to be because I know I can hear so much new stuff all the time. It's going to force people who really want to be creative and interesting to try that much harder to stand out." ☐

MILLION DOLLAR MARXISTS

With guests • New City • Fri, Nov 26



New LPs from: Tom Waits- Real Gone, Kinks, Motorhead, Parliament, Discharge, Rancid & Op Ivy new picture discs, Social D- new LP & 2 DVDs, Sam Roberts, Converge, VU, Defiance, GBH, Nico, Mono Soul, Punk, Lounge, Country used LPs Jukebox 45's back in stock for Xmas! New CDs from: SNFU- In The Meantime, 3 Inches of Blood, Ted Leo



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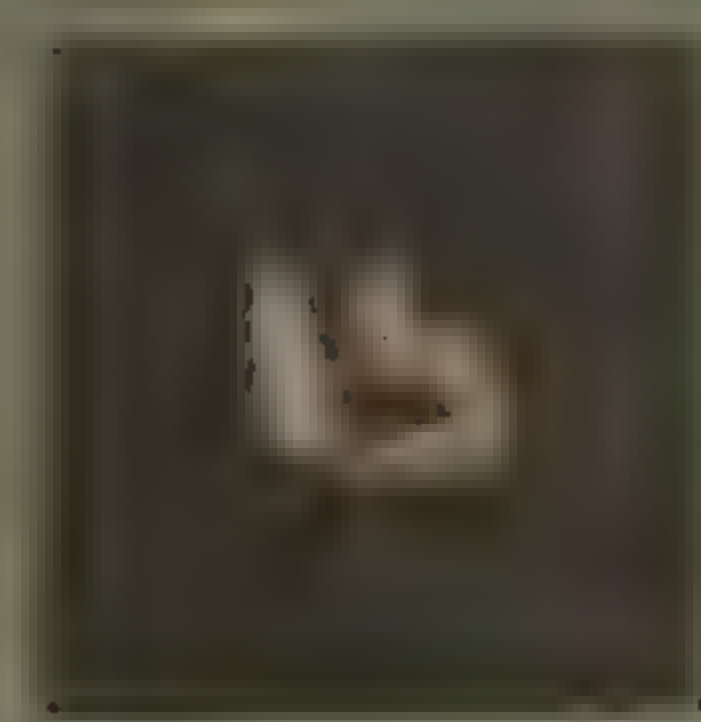
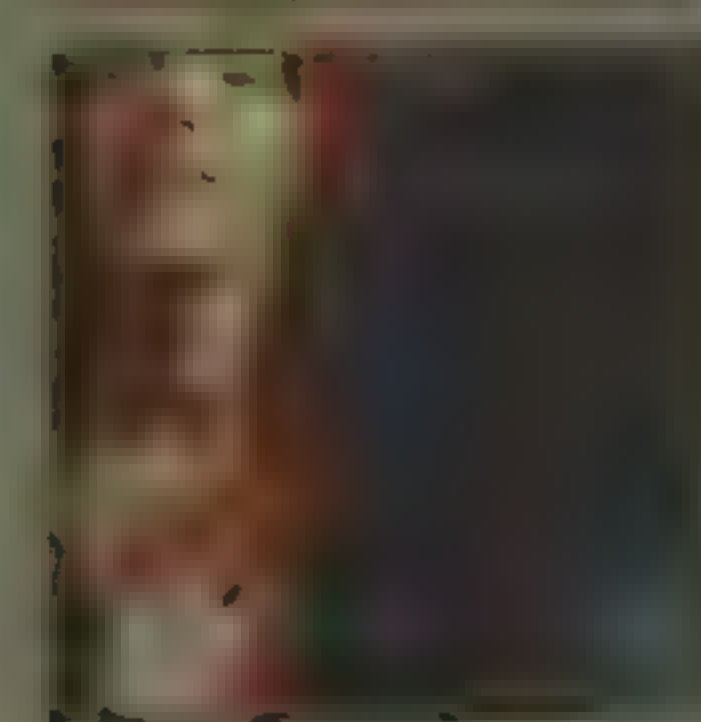
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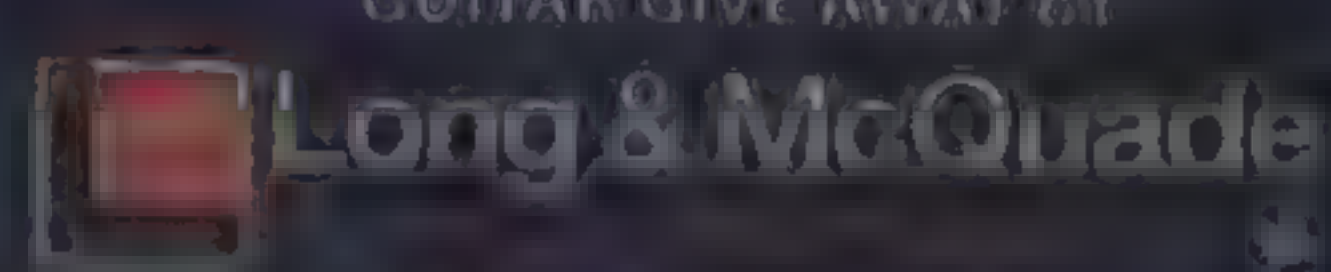


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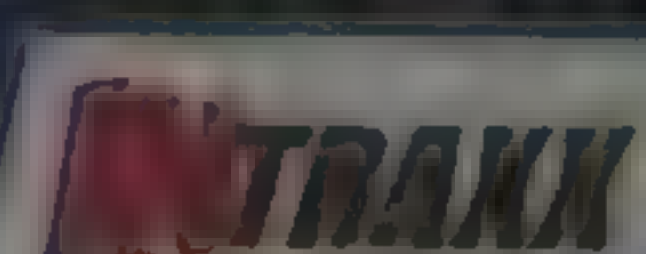
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# Immodest Mouth



## Out of Your Mouth's Jason Darr is unembarrassed by his band's success

By HEATHER ADLER

If their blacker-than-black attire, copious eyeliner and big tattoos weren't enough of a tip-off, let's just say it outright: Out of Your Mouth is filled with fighters. The Calgary band's rise to success—their debut release, *Draghdad*, was put out by BMG/Zomba and has so far spawned two top-10 singles—has been marked by more than its fair share of impediments: a failed deal with Dreamworks Records, a complete reshuffling of the lineup and name changes, just to name a few. But even with the band starting to take off, lead singer Jason Darr still has his fightin' face on.

Surf over to Out of Your Mouth's official website ([www.outofyourmouth.com](http://www.outofyourmouth.com)) and the first glimpses of Darr's combative nature start to simmer through cyberspace. There, proudly displayed for all to see, is a home video of the gutsy singer defacing the van of their tourmates, Edmonton's own Social Code, with an impasto of feces, urine and other unmentionable grossities. "Social Code figured the best time to pull a prank on tour was the second last day of the tour," Darr snickers, "and so we taught them a lesson. It's actually the very last day of the tour when you want to vandalize another band's van. If you're going to do it,

you better do it right—I think we demonstrated that quite heavily with the mighty hand of doom. They got comfortable enough around us that they thought they could put mustard, toilet paper and condoms on our van, but we assured them that wasn't a good idea. We answered the call of toilet paper by smearing poo all over the locks on their van and writing with it all over the side."

It seems Darr has become quite comfortable dealing with... umm... shit in the music industry. Out of Your Mouth, originally known around town as Flu, was first signed to a development deal with Dreamworks and got as far as recording

### PREVIEW ALTERNATIVE

demos with Dave Ogilvie (Skinny Puppy, Nine Inch Nails) before being unceremoniously dropped from the label. "Every day I thought about giving up," Darr says. "It was the low point of my life. It was like on Monday everybody loves you and they want to fly you to New York and they're talking to you like you're going to be the next big thing, then by Wednesday they don't take your calls anymore. It's a very, very difficult thing to adjust to, especially when you have no experience in the industry." Eventually, the songs they recorded with Ogilvie helped the band secure a second deal with Zomba/BMG, which Darr says was a huge feat considering all the hype surrounding them had completely died down while they were out of the

public eye working with Dreamworks.

AND THAT WASN'T the end of their struggles. Darr decided that if the group was going to advance to the next level he would have to change the lineup in a big way, so he replaced everyone from the hard-hitting, prog-rock act except bassist Paule Sperman. "That was a luxury I took advantage of to get the best band possible supporting me," Darr says. "There are a lot of players that have come into the fold, then left the fold. It comes down to finding the right people for the right reasons. Having good players is a great thing, but it's not the only thing; you need people you can rely on, people you can count on and people who can think well."

A few name changes later, the newly christened Out of Your Mouth finally hit the airwaves and they've done well for themselves, charting on MuchMusic and major rock stations across the country. It's an enviable position that any other band would love to seize for themselves, which is why Darr says he plans to keep in top fighting form. "I think the only thing I find surprising is how quickly an audience can forget about you and how fickle they can be if you're not in their face every day," he says. "There's so much good music out there, so you really have to fight for your spot, and no matter how many years you fight to get to that spot, it's nothing in comparison to what you have to do to keep that spot." ☐

OUT OF YOUR MOUTH

With Social Code • The Nest • Sat, Nov 27

## They're a real Nowhere band

Road to Nowhere followed a steep learning curve before recording *Last Train Home*

By STEVEN SANDOR

For the members of Edmonton's Road to Nowhere, being in a band required a lot of on-the-job training. While both singer/bassist Kelly Callin and guitar player Brian Cooke had some experience before joining the band (a total of three gigs between them) they and fellow members Maciek Pukowiec (drums) Duane Fincaryk (guitar) all admit they were still learning their instruments even after the band was founded in 2001.

The band formed after Fincaryk and Callin started jamming together in a garage; they knew they needed a drummer and asked Pukowiec if he was interested, even though he had never sat behind a drum kit before. All they knew was that a drum kit was available at a garage sale for \$260, so Pukowiec, a former tennis player, took some crash lessons and got ready to be the third member of the band. A few months later, Cooke was invited into the fold. "Basically, I went out and bought the drum kit, and I had a

guys show me some basics, like 4/4 rock 'n' roll time," Pukowiec says. "We really learned as we went along, so we are not a covers band."

"When we started, you wouldn't believe how horrible we were," adds Fincaryk. "None of us could sing, we were out of tune and out of time—we couldn't play."

Three years gives a band a lot of time to get their chops; now, Road to

### PREVIEW INDIE

Nowhere is ready to support a new CD, *Last Train Home*. And the record shows the band has learned not only how to play their instruments, but how to put out some very diverse rock and punk music as well. But it wasn't easy. Road to Nowhere entered the studio last December to start laying down tracks, but once they got there, they realized they weren't polished enough to make a record. "My advice to any band looking to put out their first CD is that no matter what you think, you aren't ready for it yet," laughs Cooke.

"We were trying to record the album at that time, but we ended up canceling," explains Callin. "It actually worked out well, because some of the songs we recorded at that time were our weaker songs. We were able to go with our best material this time around."

While Fincaryk and Callin work

out the basic framework of most of the material, they insist that Road to Nowhere is not the kind of band in which a couple of members dominate. "Even though there is an even number of guys in the band," Callin says, "we make sure that we all vote on everything. I never understood why it is that some bands do it where one person writes the lyrics and all the members make changes to the music but they don't get credit for writing the song. That's why all our songs state that we wrote them collectively."

This democratic approach is one of the major reasons why *Last Train Home* is such a diverse record: the album begins with a blitz of punk, swing and rockabilly, but also embraces straight-ahead rock 'n' roll and even has some tender, slower moments. "We're all into different things," Fincaryk observes, "but we all have a common ground. Listening to music around here is totally crazy; we'll all be listening to a Fats Domino record and then have a Motörhead disc on right afterward."

Right now, the band's major goal is to get their music out to the masses. To that end, anyone who pays the \$6 cover charge at the band's CD release party will get a copy of *Last Train Home*. ☐

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CD RELEASE PARTY

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# top 10 cd's

- 1) **EMINEM**  
ENCORE (EXPLICIT)
- 2) **SHANIA TWAIN**  
GREATEST HITS
- 3) **PEARL JAM**  
REARVIEW MIRROR:  
GREATEST HITS
- 4) **NEIL YOUNG**  
GREATEST HITS
- 5) **DESTINY'S CHILD**  
DESTINY FULFILLED
- 6) **ANDREA BOCELLI**  
ANDREA
- 7) **ROD STEWART**  
STARDUST
- 8) **BRITNEY SPEARS**  
GREATEST HITS
- 9) **ELTON JOHN**  
PEACHTREE ROAD
- 10) **PERFECT CIRCLE**  
EMOTIVE

# NEW SOUNDS

## WOVEN HAND CONSIDER THE BIRDS (SOUNDS FAMILYRE)

It's dark and hopeful at the same time; it's a mix of devotional ballads and songs of woe that will surely draw comparisons to the dark brooding of Nick Cave and the abstract, country genius of Will Oldham. And I think it just might be the best damn record I've heard this year.

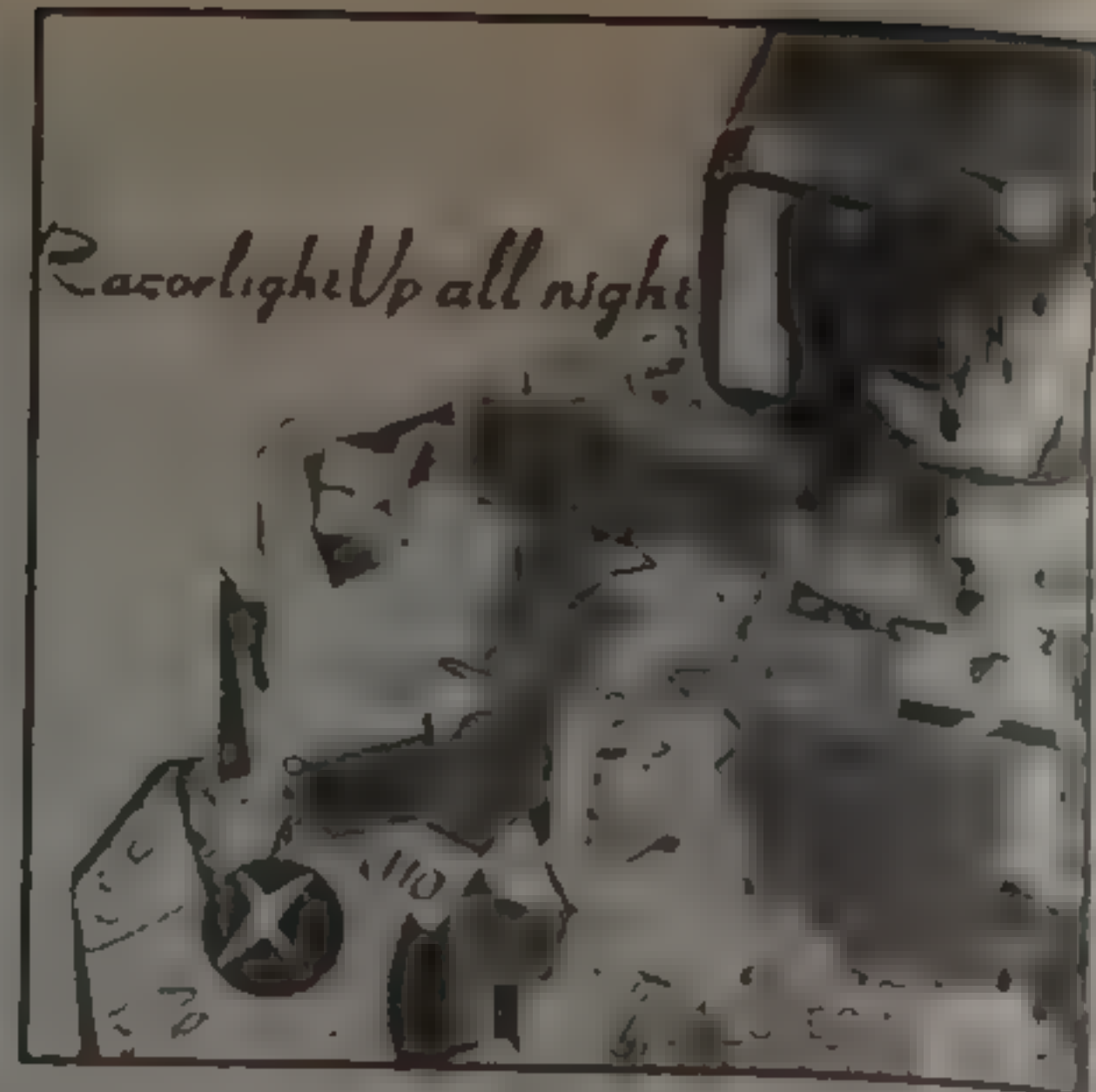
Woven Hand is the brainchild of David Eugene Edwards, who's better known for his work with 16 Horsepower, but it's with Woven Hand that he finds a real voice. Like the finest work of Oldham/Palace Brothers/"Bonnie" Prince Billy, these multilayered-yet-true-to-the-folk songs will take a few listens to sink in, but you'll be rewarded by hearing something new every time. Edwards has all the confidence of a preacher from the pulpit. His world is one where God is a vindictive, Old Testament bastard—a world where love is fleeting but a good friend lasts forever. The haunting "Into the Piano" features moaning choruses supporting a lone keyboard melody; the

guitars of "To Make a Ring" wail sorrowfully as Edwards warns us that "The Lord will not be mocked, not by you or me"; and the outstanding "Sparrow Falls" uses gongs and chimes to intensify the album's Gothic feel without losing a drop of down-home authenticity.

It's not a question of whether this record belongs on the year-end top-10 lists; the only question is how high it should appear. ★★★★★ —STEVEN SANDOR

## FOUR TET LATENIGHTTALES (AZULI)

With this atmospheric new compilation, Kieran Hebden (who records lots of brainy electronic albums under the alias Four Tet) joins the growing list of DJs, producers, recording artists and assorted musical tastemakers who've contributed to Azuli's highly-regarded *Another-LateNight/LateNightTales* series of celebrity mixtapes. (Other acts who've contributed to the series include the Flaming Lips, Sly and Robbie, Groove



Armada, Zero 7 and Jamiroquai.) I've always had a fondness for these kinds of projects—not just because they're a great way to discover obscure gems from the vinyl era, but also because any song, even one that initially might appear fairly unremarkable, suddenly acquires a certain mystique when you know a musician you admire numbers it among his favourites.

Take Icarus's "Benevolent Incubator," for instance. It's a soft, subdued yet anxious-sounding percussion exercise that sounds like a frantic drum 'n' bass track with a blanket thrown over it—it's an interesting track, but its real source of fascination is the fact that in his liner notes, Hebden claims to have listened to it hundreds of times and still thinks it sounds "perfect." For me, though, the most pleasant discoveries on the disc are a few choice slabs of late-'60s studio magic: Fairport Convention's "Tale in Hard Time"; "Earth," a hypnotic track from Joe Henderson and Alice Coltrane's spiritual-jazz masterpiece *The Elements*; and especially "One Way Glass" by Manfred Mann's Chapter 3, which almost seems out of place on a disc called *LateNightTales*, since it features a horn arrangement so gorgeous and majestic that it sounds like the sun coming up. ★★★★★ —PAUL MATWYCHUK

## RAZORLIGHT UP ALL NIGHT (UNIVERSAL)

There's a strong movement in British music right now away from the atmospheric, swelling pop/rock of Radiohead, Travis and Coldplay and toward

more direct and gritty rock music. As North American music gets more and more complex, with an increasing number of bands writing long songs with more dynamic and time changes than a Rush album, the Brits are rocking out in glorious 4/4 time.

The Libertines may be the poster boys of this return-to-rock movement, but Razorlight's first album compares quite nicely. There's really no trickery to what Razorlight do: they write music made for smoky bars and hung-over mornings. This isn't music to save the world, but music to keep the listener up all night, air-drumming along with a bottle of whiskey clenched firmly in one hand.

Razorlight won't appeal to traditional Britpop fans—this is a record for listeners who still cherish their Replacements records. No new ground is being broken here, but it's nice to be reminded how the simple combination of guitar, bass and drums can soothe the soul. ★★★★★ —STEVEN SANDOR

## GWEN STEFANI LOVE, ANGEL, MUSIC, BABY (INTERSCOPE)

Gwen Stefani is a fashionable girl. Somehow it seems fitting that this songstress, who stole the limelight from No Doubt simply by coming across as the nicest piece of eye candy, would give her debut solo album the same name as her fashion line: Love Angel Music Baby ("Lamb"—get it?) But in this case, Stefani's keen sense of style and eye for hot trends might be a bit of a problem. Primarily a dance album, *Love, Angel, Music,*

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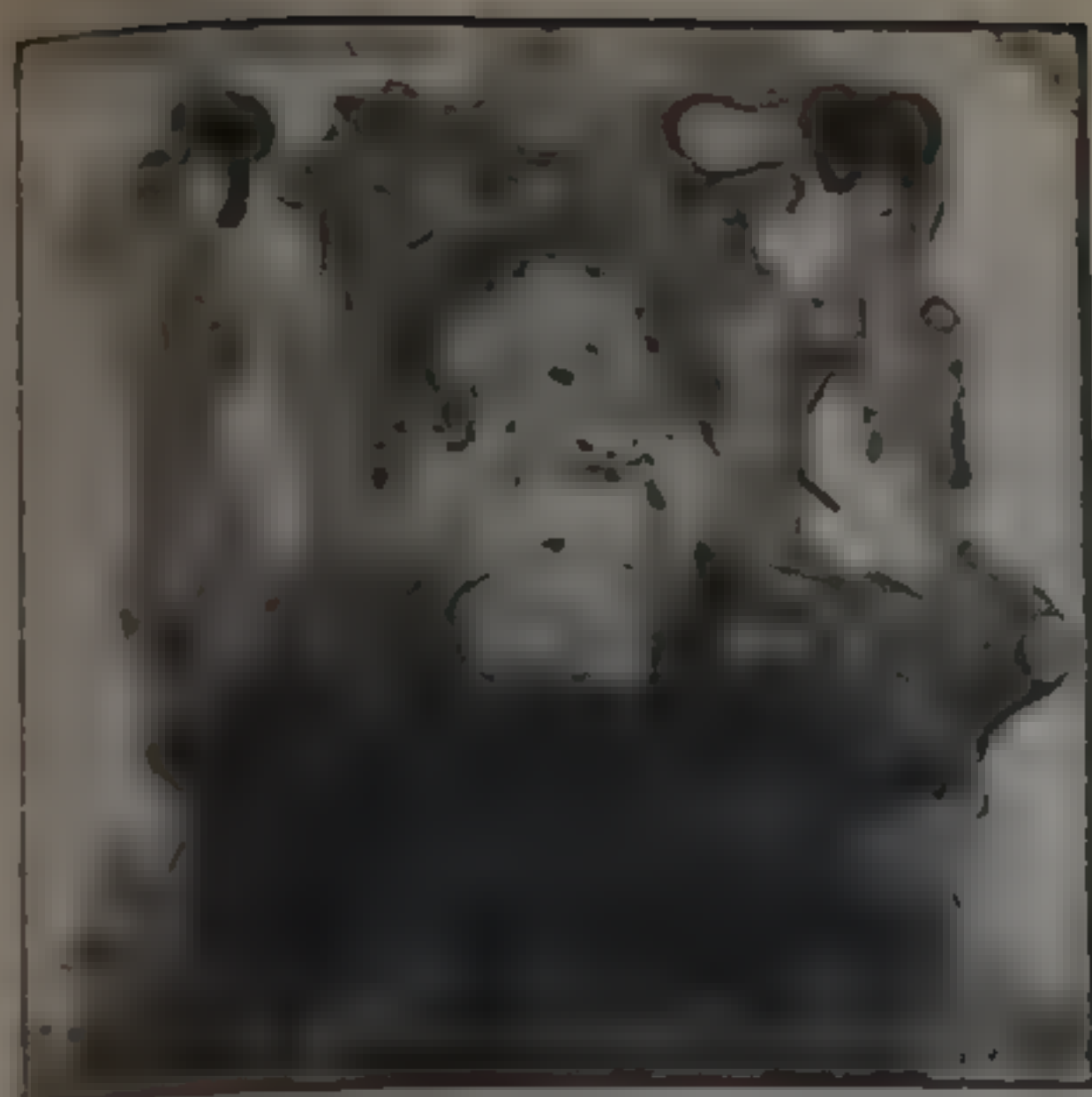
**top 10 sellers**

01. from a basement... elliot smith	06. crooked rain, crooked rain pavement
02. the tigers have spoken neko case	07. shake the sheets ted leo/pharmacists
03. funeral arcade fire	08. give up postal service
04. avelon sutra harold budd	09. world of echo arthur russell
05. matador @ 15 v/a	10. ambush lateef the chief (aka maroons)

# top 10 dvd's

- 1) **ELF (2DVD)**
- 2) **SHREK 2**
- 3) **CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK**
- 4) **BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER**
- 5) **LIVE AID (4DVDs)**
- 6) **THE OFFICE: SPECIALS**
- 7) **IRON GIANT (SPECIAL EDITION)**
- 8) **ERIC CLAPTON: CROSSROADS GUITAR FESTIVAL**
- 9) **PERFECT CIRCLE: AMOTION (DVD+CD)**
- 10) **STAR WARS TRILOGY (4DVD)**





Baby has a ridiculously long list of contributors, including Dr. Dre, Eve, the Neptunes, Andre 3000, Nellee Hooper, Dallas Austin, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Linda Perry and Tony Kanal. That might sound like a good thing, but in practice, it feels like Stefani tossed elements of house, new wave, rap, hip-hop and sugar-sweet pop into a blender, then set it to liquefy.

"Hollaback Girl" is a bizarre bit of progressive pop with a rhythm slightly reminiscent of Queen's "Another One Bites the Dust." The result is something that sounds like a cross between a song they'd play during a hockey game and a rap track that's partially sung by a 12-year-old girl. "Bubble Pop Electric" is a jerky, electronic number with the kind of wacky synthesizer quirks and quarks and inexplicable lyrics you'd expect from a Japanese pop album. The album's only successes are tracks—like the single "What Are You Waiting For"—that set out to be nothing more than straight dance music. The rest tries a little too hard to be all forms of fashion for all people—it's tacky. ★★ —HEATHER ADLER

#### NANCY SINATRA NANCY SINATRA (SANCTUARY)

So we were listening to Nancy Sinatra's 1968 album *Movin' With Nancy* in the production room the other day, and when "Some Velvet Morning," her per-

plexing, schizophrenic duet with Lee Hazlewood, came over the speakers, it wove its usual hypnotic spell over the entire room. Well, at least it wove a spell over Quick Spins co-writer Whitey Houston and me; news editor Chris Boutet remained unconvinced, saying he'd never understood what people saw in Nancy Sinatra, a negligible singer who never even wrote any of her own songs. How could anybody take her seriously?

Well, Nancy Sinatra may have been little more than an attractive blonde mouthpiece for Lee Hazlewood, but she was the perfect attractive blonde mouthpiece for the crackbrained poetry of Hazlewood's songwriting, which sounded all the more profound when her toneless but sultry voice was delivering it. Hazlewood is absent from *Nancy Sinatra*, but in his place is an all-star lineup of rock songwriters, including Jarvis Cocker, Bono, Morrissey, Pete Dinklage and Steven Van Zandt. There are only two real misfires here: "Ain't No Easy Way," an embarrassing faux-country duet with Jon Spencer, and "Mamma's Boy," a dull, pretentious dirge by Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore.

But there are only a couple of truly inspired songs here as well: "Burning Down the Spark," on which Calexico captures the mythic Western landscape of Sinatra/Hazlewood classics like "Sand"; and especially Morrissey's "Let Me Kiss You," a near-perfect blend of swooning romanticism and eloquent self-hatred. The rest of the disc consists of merely serviceable songs that fail to

find new facets of Sinatra's singular musical personality. *Nancy Sinatra* finds its iconic star all booted up but with no place to walk. ★★★ —PAUL MATWYCHUK

#### DRY KILL LOGIC THE DEAD AND DREAMING (REPOSESSION/EMI)

Dry Kill Logic are really, really angry. I'm not sure what it is they're angry about, though, because this entire album is an incoherent mishmash of ogre-like growls and super-speed thrash guitars. I'm actually not even sure they're actually using real words, but *man*, are they ever pissed off. Song titles like "Lost," "One Handed Knife Fight" and "Neither Here Nor Missed," only confirm my suspicions that this is clearly a group made up of anger-management class dropouts.

The funny thing about *The Dead and Dreaming*, however, are those precious few moments when lead singer Cliff Rigano stops shredding his vocal cords by making inhuman grunts and snarls. It's during those breaks when he actually sings actual melodies that you realize the guy actually isn't half-bad—in fact, he's got a pretty good ear for harmony. Can someone get this guy some Prozac or St. John's Wort or something? Maybe a pet kitten? If Dry Kill Logic gave up some of their cartoonish rage and eased up on the outlandish-even-for-metal vocal rampages, they might actually be listenable.

—HEATHER ADLER

## QUICK SPINS

BY WHITEY AND T.B. PLAYER

#### C'mon

*Midnight Is the Answer*  
(Maplemusic)

Ten new commandments  
From bearded rock messiah  
Smiles non-believers!

#### The Futureheads

*The Futureheads*  
(679)

Love of XTC  
And tuncful popsmithery  
Could not sound better

#### Westlife

*Allow Us to Be Frank*  
(RCA)

Rat Park cover songs?  
If Sinatra was alive  
He'd kick their asses

#### Brad Turner Trio

*Question the Answer*  
(Maximum Jazz)

Just like a jazz bar  
But without all of the smoke  
And pretentious cunts

#### Kalan Porter

*219 Days*  
(BMG)

Sorry, but I need  
More syllables to fully  
Convey my disgust

#### Peters Drury Quartet

*Swing Into Christmas*  
(PDT)

Hey! If you like swing  
And you love Christmas music  
This shiteheap's for you

#### Kim Barlow

*Lucky Burden*  
(Caribou)

New Canadiana  
Well-picked, sweetly harmonized  
I gently nod off

#### Snoop Dogg

*Rhythm & Gangsta*  
(Geffen)

Oh, Calvin Broadus!  
You rule, but can we forgive  
Timberlake duet?

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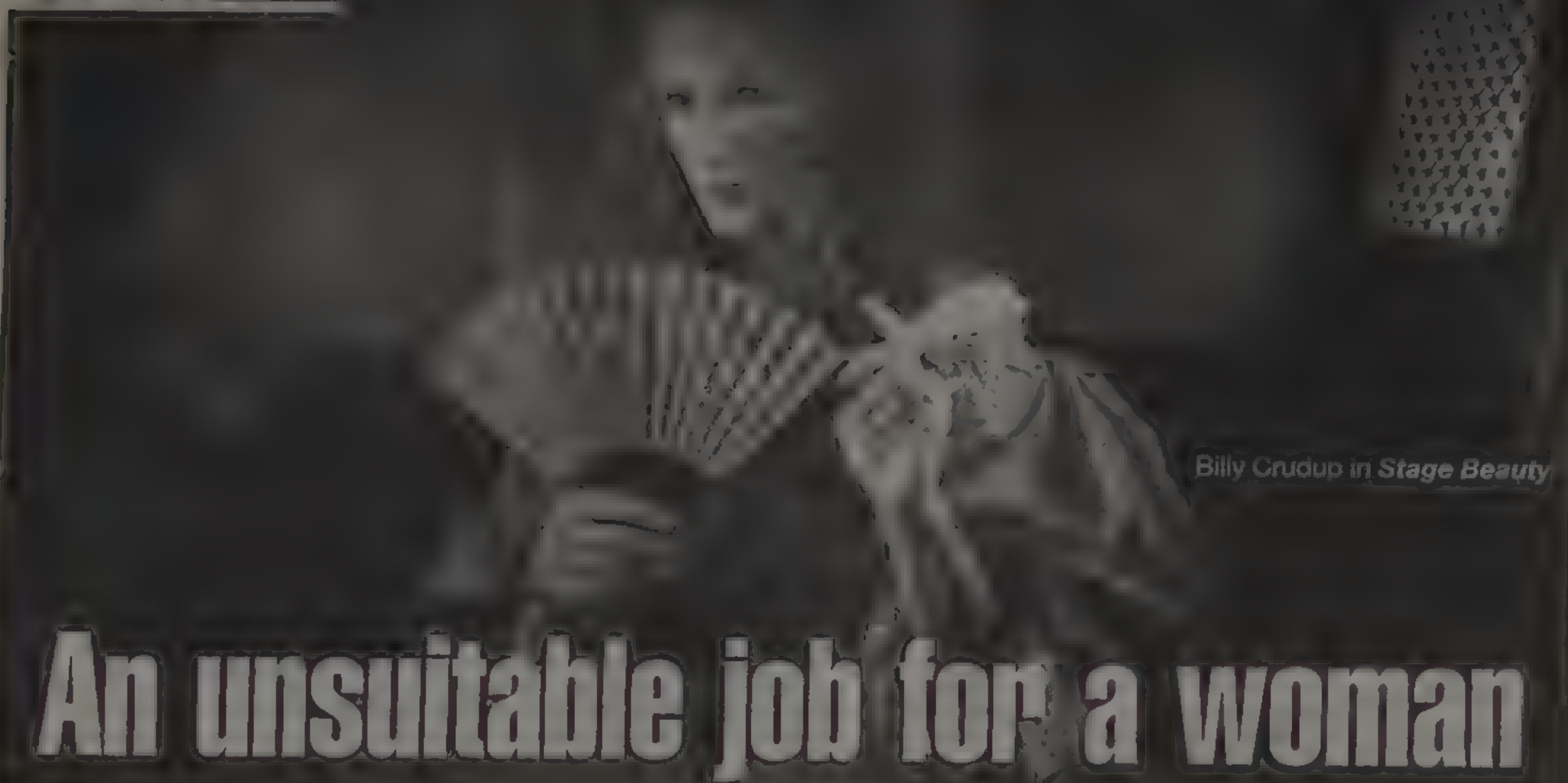
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FILM



Billy Crudup in *Stage Beauty*

## An unsuitable job for a woman

Billy Crudup plays a cross-dressed theatre icon in frilly *Stage Beauty*

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

The opening titles of *Stage Beauty* tell us that the film is based on the life of the 17th-century theatre star Ned Kynaston, although I suspect it's "based on" Kynaston's life in much the same way that *Shakespeare in Love* was "based on" Shakespeare's. In other words, so loosely that poor Ned himself probably wouldn't recognize himself in it.

As *Stage Beauty* begins, Kynaston is at the height of his fame and popularity—but it's a curious kind of fame. With a royal ban still in place against women performing onstage, Kynaston has risen to the top of the theatre world by specializing in female roles. Far from being thought of as a freak or a deviant, though, Kynaston was worshipped as a sort of exotic sex symbol. After seeing him perform in John Fletcher's *The Loyall Subject* in 1660, diarist Samuel Pepys even went so far as to proclaim Kynaston "the loveliest lady I ever saw in my life." Kynaston is played in the film by Billy Crudup, whose angular face and lean but athletic build don't

seem especially feminine, even disguised under elaborate female costumes and thick makeup, and I've read a few reviews arguing that Crudup's unconvincing drag act is a major drawback to the film.

But I think that's precisely the point that director Richard Eyre and screenwriter Jeffrey Hatcher (adapting his own play *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*) are trying to make. Kynaston isn't trying to look like a "real" woman. Instead, he's embodying what generations of men that came before him have decided are the essential qualities of femininity: delicacy, grace, passivity. In fact, there's an amusing scene between Kynaston and his dresser

Maria (Claire Danes), a young woman who dreams of becoming an actress herself, in which Kynaston ridicules Maria for even suggesting she'd have the skills necessary to properly play a woman onstage. ("Do you know the eight poses of feminine supplication?" he says condescendingly.) Playing female roles requires years of specialized training, as far as Kynaston's concerned—the fact that Maria has actually been a woman all her life is completely irrelevant.

The first half of *Stage Beauty* has a lot of fun playing around with gender roles and having its characters interact with actual historical figures like Pepys, Nell Gwyn and King Charles II (an amusing study in weary royal dissipation by Rupert Everett). And there's a lovely ironic reversal built into the script: after Charles decrees not only that women may now perform onstage, but that men are henceforth forbidden from playing female roles, Kynaston finds his career in ruins while Maria (thanks more to sheer novelty value than talent) becomes the newest star of the London stage.

**BUT IT'S ALSO AT THIS POINT** in the story that the film's sexual politics become hopelessly muddled. Kynaston is portrayed at the start of the film as proudly homosexual: he even has a male lover, an aristocrat played by Ben Chaplin who's sort of the 17th-century equivalent of those closeted gay guys who prefer making out with she-males. But the film portrays Kynaston's feminine instincts and his homosexual

leanings more as an unwelcome curse than a true part of his personality: one of Crudup's big scenes takes place when he auditions for a male acting job, but starts sobbing in horror when he realizes his female acting gestures are so ingrained that he can't get rid of them—his hand keeps fluttering delicately in the air like Dr. Strangelove unable to stop his arm from giving the Nazi salute.

The film ends with Maria and Kynaston performing *Othello* before the king—he's been coaching her to play Desdemona and has stepped in at the last minute to play Othello. Their chemistry is electric, and the idea is that not only has Kynaston

finally been able to express his true artistry as an actor by playing a male

role, but that he's finally put all that homosexual business behind him by falling in love with Maria—as if being gay were just a confused, childish phase he had to grow out of. This notion isn't just offensive to gays; it's offensive to actors too. Why does *Stage Beauty* consider playing Desdemona less of an achievement than playing Othello? Isn't that kind of transformation what theatre is all about? *Stage Beauty* presents itself as a celebration of acting, but in fact it's saying you'll be happiest if you go through life playing the most conventional role you can find. ☐

### STAGE BEAUTY

Directed by Richard Eyre • Written by Jeffrey Hatcher • Starring Billy Crudup, Claire Danes and Tom Wilkinson • Opens Fri, Nov 26

## Natural born conqueror

Oliver Stone's *Alexander* makes a muddle of the life of Macedonian warrior

By COLLEEN ADDISON

Oliver Stone's newest movie, *Alexander*, tells the story of one of the world's greats, a general whose army loved him so much they followed him almost unquestioningly for years, a king whose empire arched across the known world. It has fancy palaces, great scenery, battle-crazed elephants. It has Val Kilmer (as King Philip, Alexander's father), and he does an okay job.

Sound good? It isn't.

Colin Farrell's Alexander is a conflicted man, a conqueror dreaming of peace, a passionate, violent leader. Over and over again we see him, now in tears, now drinking away his sorrows. Alexander is tortured, yes, but why? Is it his now-I-like-you-now-I-don't father? His overprotective mother (Angelina Jolie)? Maybe both? After announcing *ad nauseam* that "I am not my father," Alexander tries to strangle his bride (Rosario Dawson) the same way that King Philip tried to strangle Queen Olympias. (It's dad!)

Later, Alexander recoils in horror upon seeing his mother's face in a goblet of wine. (It's mom!)

The entire film echoes this confusion. Lessons for Alexander are everywhere: "It's lonely at the top," "Everyone is out to get you, but women really might," "Multiculturalism is great, but beware Orientals." But there's no overarching theme. Repeatedly, Stone presents one piece of symbolism, only to abandon it for another, completely different one. Alexander's mother is compared to Medea, the Greek princess who, upon

REVUE EPIC

being deserted by her husband, killed their children. (Don't trust women!) Then we switch to one-eyed Philip as Oedipus, tearing out his eyes in horror at his own actions. (Kingship sucks!) It's too much, and it doesn't work.

**AND IT GETS WORSE.** The battle scenes are standard-issue. The CGI is very pretty, but the continuous labels at the bottom of the screen telling us where we are grow wearying. The men speak in disorienting Irish and Scottish accents; the women sound Slavic. Stone has tried to explain this discrepancy away as a symbol of the Macedonians' status

in their world: much as Celtic accents sound country-bumpkinish to the British, so would Macedonians sound low-class to the Greeks.

Well, okay, except this argument counters yet another of the points the film tries to make. Race and class are a key issue in *Alexander*, but only to the extent that the Macedonians consider themselves superior, not inferior to the cultures they encounter. Alexander's generals are horrified to find him actually befriending the uncivilized hordes and react in fury when he takes an Asian bride. Alexander alone is politically correct, happily partying with the locals everywhere he goes. This is fine, if a bit heavy-handed, except for one thing: Anthony Hopkins, who serves as *Alexander's* Greek chorus/narrator, says at the start of the film that Alexander is great because he "brought freedom to people everywhere." Uh... liberating the barbarians from the hell of their existence is not a great thing in this day and age. You find yourself unwillingly comparing Alexander to George Bush.

**MUCH SPECULATION** has appeared in the press over how Stone would portray Alexander's sexuality. Yes, he swung both ways. But having presented this brave premise, Stone spends most of his time frantically running away from it. One can hard-



ly blame him, though, given the current American political climate, for backing down from showing passion between men. (In interviews, Stone has carefully insisted on calling the relationship between Alexander and his boyhood friend and fellow warrior Hephaistion (Jared Leto) "brotherly love.") However, he makes Hephaistion into a nothing character. After being told at the beginning of the movie that love between men is noble when it involves help and counsel, we get a relationship that has neither. Leto gets few lines other than "I love you," or words to that effect. Stone's approach to perhaps the central relationship in Alexan-

der's life is symbolized by a scene that takes place on the eve of battle. Alexander announces that this is not a night to be alone and then goes into his tent, leaving Hephaistion to walk sadly off into the darkness.

You don't go into a movie like *Alexander* expecting miracles. But a coherent, inoffensive theme and a director who doesn't run away from his ideas would be nice. ☐

### ALEXANDER

Directed by Oliver Stone • Written by Christopher Kyle, Oliver Stone and Laeta Kalogridis • Starring Colin Farrell, Jared Leto, Angelina Jolie and Val Kilmer • Now playing



# Barried, with children

*Finding Neverland* explains where *Peter Pan* playwright found his inspiration

BY STEPHEN NOTLEY

**D**o we find Neverland in *Finding Neverland*? We do, and as it is in *Peter Pan* it's a shifting no-place just across the unknown boundary between child and adult, the sacrifices and opportunities of maturity.

*Finding Neverland* starts on a more adult footing than *Peter Pan*, with Johnny Depp as James Barrie in 1903 London watching his latest play flop hard. It's "bull's pizzle," as he himself says in his curly English accent. His relationship with his wife is somewhat strained, and that strain increases enormously once Barrie meets Kate Winslet with her four imaginative, game-playing boys in the park and decides to start spending all of his time with them. He becomes the agent of the boys' childlike expression, joining in their games and pirate make-believe, spinning stories, writing it all down for this great new play he's going to do. But at the same time, with a dead father and a dying mother, these are children in desperate need of adulthood, and even as Depp invokes their childlike imagination he also helps them face the difficult transitions and truths of adulthood.

Johnny Depp is the reason a lot of people are going to see this movie, and he's good as he most always is, though unspectacular. In total contrast to his work as Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, he gives a restrained performance this time around. Depp's Barrie enjoys or even prefers the company of children, but he's no elfin man-child. Even though he's the avatar and enabler of childlike expression, he's always solidly adult, grounded—serious, even. He never believes himself to be a little boy as he plays with the others; he always knows himself to be a grown-up man. It's just that his job is to write plays, so he gets to play a bit more than most adults.

**DIRECTED BY MARC FORSTER** from a stage play by Allan Knee, *Finding Neverland* takes an unusual approach to the fantastical. Barrie's imagination is hardwired to theatre, so when he dances with his shaggy St. Bernard in front of the boys, telling them he's dancing with a bear, he imagines himself dancing not with a bear, but with a guy in a big bear costume on an impossibly splendid stage. When he plays pirate and walks the boys off the plank, it's an unreal boat set with wooden waves roiling below. When he creates Neverland, it's a backyard strewn with misty extras. It's an interesting sideways step, not into

the effervescent special effects of last year's *Peter Pan*, but into the creativity of a playwright.

*Finding Neverland* works best as kind of a mirror-image of *Peter Pan*. Where *Peter Pan* is grounded in the perspective of a child uneasily facing the tantalizing challenges of maturity, *Finding Neverland* takes the view of an adult looking back, wistfully

## REVUE WHIMSY

eulogizing the lost wisps of innocence, ruefully watching as children become grown-ups before his eyes. The kids who play the boys turn out to be ferociously honest little actors—particularly Freddie Highmore who plays Peter, desperately struggling with his grief over his father's death and his mother's illness, simultaneously needing and rejecting the make-believe of childhood and theatre.

*Finding Neverland* is a subtle film, an interesting counterpoint to last year's *Peter Pan*, and it's a trib-

ute to the strength of the original play that the best moments in *Finding Neverland* are those that touch on it, from Barrie's first imagining of the boys drifting off their beds and out the window to the first performance of *Peter Pan*, in which Barrie has stocked the audience with children whose honest delight could puncture the unstated reserve of the seen-it-all professional-class theatregoing adults. As an alternate take on the themes of *Peter Pan*,

*Finding Neverland* has something to say to anybody who's ever gotten older. Which, last time I checked, was everybody. ☺

### FINDING NEVERLAND

Directed by Marc Forster • Written by Allan Knee and David Magee • Starring Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet and Julie Christie • Opens Fri, Nov 26

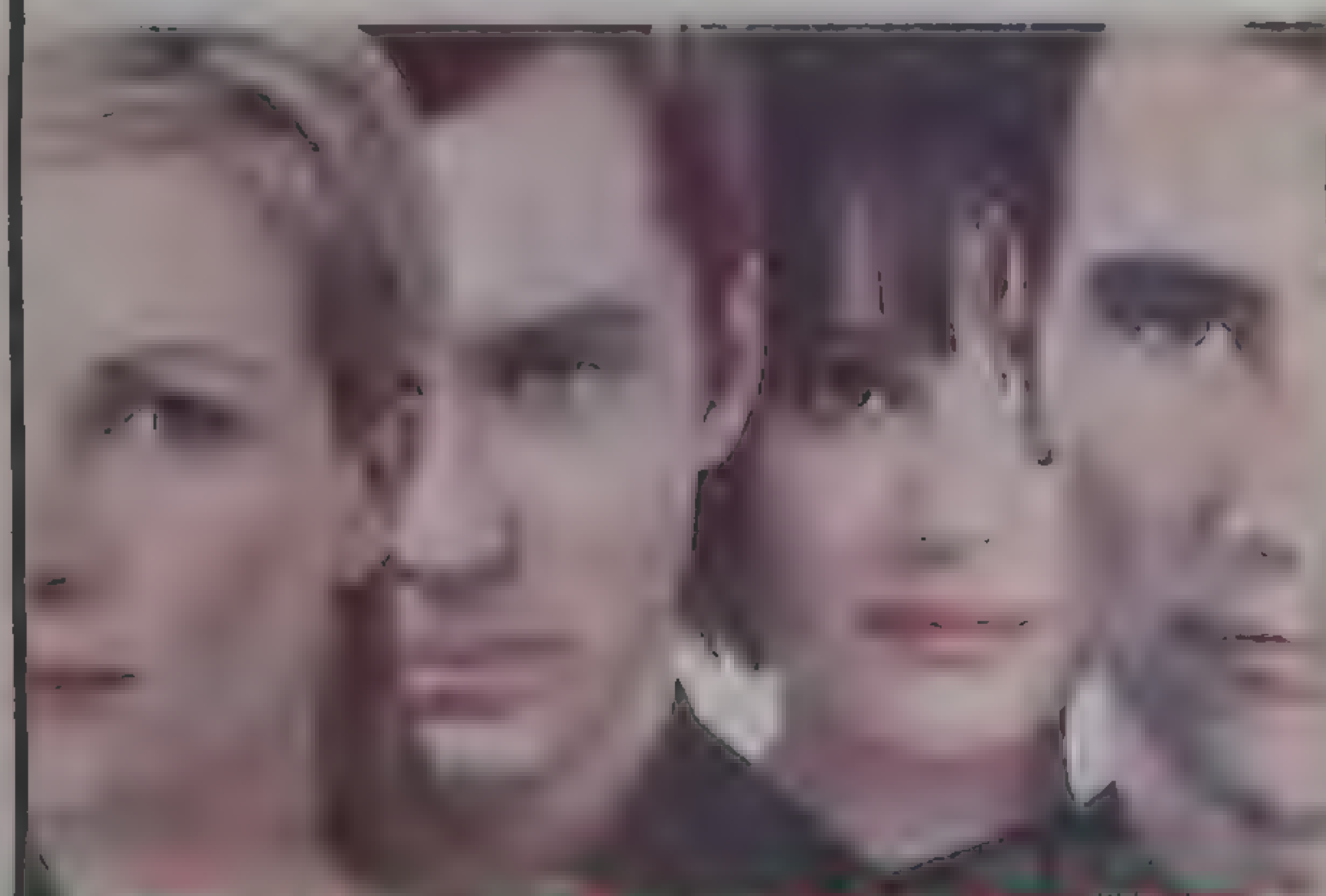


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## NOVEMBER 25-DECEMBER 1, 2004



# FILM LISTINGS

SHOWTIMES for Friday, November 26 to Thursday, December 2

All showtimes are subject to change at any time. Please contact theatre for confirmation.

**GARNEAU**  
8712-109 St. 433-0728

**ERA DRAKE** 14A  
y 7 00 9 30 Sat Sun 2 00

**PRINCESS**  
10337-82 Ave. 433-0728

**STAGE BEAUTY** 14A

**WHAT THE BLEEP DO WE KNOW** 14A

**THE TAKE** PG  
Coarse language. Sat Sun 1:00

**METRO CINEMA**  
9828-101A Ave. Citadel Theatre. 425-9212

**KING KONG VS. GODZILLA** STC  
Fri Sat 7 00

**DIGI** STC  
Sat Sun Mon Tue 9 00

**HUKKLE** STC  
Sun Mon 7 00

**GRANDIN THEATRE**  
Grandin Mall, Sir Winston Churchill Ave., St. Albert. 458-9822

**THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE** G  
Daily 12 30 2 30 4 30 6 45 8 45

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
Daily 12 15 2 30 4 45 7 00 9 20

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
Daily 1 15 3 15

**ALEXANDER** 14A  
Gory scenes. Daily 6 30 9 45

**CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS** PG  
Daily 12 45 2 45 4 45 7 15 9 10

**BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON** 14A  
Coarse language. Daily 1 00 3:00 5:00 7 20 9 30

**LEDUC CINEMAS**  
4762-50 St. Leduc. 988-2728

The showtimes listed are for the date of this issue, Thu, November 25 only. Please contact theatre for showtimes.

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
Daily 7 00 9 30 Sat Sun 1 00 3 30

**NATIONAL TREASURE** PG  
Daily 7 00 9 30 Sat Sun 1 10 3 30

**AFTER THE SUNSET** 14A  
Daily 7 10 9 20 Sat Sun 1 20 3 40

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
Daily 7 10 9 10 Sat Sun 1 10 3 20

**WETASKIWIN CINEMAS**  
111 Ave. Great Rd. 455-0720

The showtimes listed are for the date of this issue, Thu, November 25 only. Please contact theatre for showtimes.

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
Daily 7 00 9 30 Sat Sun 1 00 3 30

**AFTER THE SUNSET** 14A  
Daily 7 10 9 20 Sat Sun 1 20 3 40

**NATIONAL TREASURE** PG  
Daily 7 00 9 30 Sat Sun 1 10 3 30

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
Daily 7 10 9 10 Sat Sun 1 10 3 20

**CINEMAPLUS**  
4490-140 St. Albert Rd. 460-1646

**THE NOTEBOOK** PG  
Suggestive scenes. Daily 6 45 9 10 Sat Sun 12 50 3 20

**TAXI** PG  
Violence. Sat Sun 1 00 Daily 6 20

**SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW** PG  
Daily 7 20 Sat Sun 1 40

**SURVIVING CHRISTMAS** PG  
Not recommended for young children

**THE BOURNE SUPREMACY** 14A  
Daily 9 25 Sat Sun 3 10

**FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS** PG  
Mature themes, not recommended for young children. Sat Sun 1 10 Daily 7 10

**TEAM AMERICA: WORLD POLICE** 18A  
Crude sexual language, not recommended for children

**WITHOUT A PADDLE** 14A  
Daily 6 40 Sat Sun 12 40

**SHAUN OF THE DEAD** 18A

**SEED OF CHUCKY** 18A  
Gory scenes. Sat Sun 1 30

**ALFIE** 14A  
Sat Sun 3 45 Daily 9 35

**THE FORGOTTEN** PG  
Sat Sun 3 50 Daily 9 40

**SHARK TALE** G  
Sat Sun 12 00 2 00 4 00 Daily 6 30 8 45

**CINEMA GUIDE**

**CITY CENTRE**  
1000-107 Ave. 433-0728

**CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS** PG  
No passes. Daily 12 40 3 30 7 00 9 30

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
Daily 1 00 4 20 7 10 9 50

**RAY** PG  
Substance abuse, not recommended for young children. Daily 12 10 3 20 6 30 9 40

**THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES** 14A  
Coarse language throughout. Subtitled. Daily 3 30 6 35 9 20

**AFTER THE SUNSET** 14A  
Fri-Wed 1 40 4 40 7 30 10 20  
Thu 1 40 4 40 10 20

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
No passes. Daily 1 20

**BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON** 14A  
Coarse language. Daily 1 30 4 30 7 20 10 10

**FINDING NEVERLAND** G  
No passes. Daily 1 10 3 50 6 40 9 15

**NATIONAL TREASURE** PG  
Daily 12 50 4 00 6 50 10 00

**ALEXANDER** 14A  
Gory scenes. No passes. Daily 12 15 4 10 8 00

**WEST MALL 8**  
1000-107 Ave. 433-0728

**I, ROBOT** PG  
Frightening scenes, not recommended for young children. Fri-Sun 1 20 3 50 6 30 9 00  
Mon-Thu 3 50 6 30 9 00

**THE BOURNE SUPREMACY** 14A  
Fri-Sun 1 50 4 30 7 10 9 35 Mon-Thu 4 30 7 10 9 35

**GHOST IN THE SHELL 2: INNOCENCE** 14A  
Violence. Daily 9 30

**FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS** PG  
Mature theme, not recommended for young children. Fri-Sun 1 30 4 00 6 50 Mon-Thu 4 00 6 50

**THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2: ROYAL ENGAGEMENT** G  
Fri-Sun 1 40 4 15 7 00 Mon-Thu 4 15 7 00

**WITHOUT A PADDLE** 14A  
Fri-Sun 2 10 4 10 7 30 9 40 Mon-Thu 4 10 7 30 9 40

**GARDEN STATE** 14A  
Coarse language, substance abuse. Daily 9 20

**SEED OF CHUCKY** 18A  
Gory scenes. Fri-Sun 2 30 4 45 7 20 9 15  
Mon-Thu 4 45 7 20 9 15

**SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW** PG  
Fri-Sun 2 00 4 20 6 35 8 50  
Mon-Thu 4 20 6 35 8 50

**SURVIVING CHRISTMAS** PG  
Not recommended for young children. Fri-Sun 2 20 4 40 6 40 8 40 Mon-Thu 4 40 6 40 8 40

**CLAREVIEW**  
4211-139 Ave. 472-7600

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
Fri-Sun 1 10 1 50 3 50 4 40 6 50 7 10 9 25 9 50  
Mon-Thu 3 50 4 40 6 50 7 10 9 25 9 50

**THE GRUDGE** 14A  
Frightening scenes. Fri-Sun 2 00 4 50 7 40 10 10  
Mon-Thu 4 50 7 40 10 10

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
No passes. Fri-Sun 12 45 3 40 6 30 8 50  
Mon-Thu 3 40 6 30 8 50

**ALEXANDER** 14A  
Gory scenes. No passes. Fri-Sun 12 50 4 20 7 50  
Mon-Thu 4 20 7 50

**NATIONAL TREASURE** PG  
Fri-Sun 12 40 3 30 6 45 9 30  
Mon-Thu 3 30 6 45 9 30

**BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON** 14A  
Coarse language. Fri-Sun 1 40 4 10 7 30 10 00  
Mon-Thu 4 10 7 30 10 00

**THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE** G  
Fri-Sun 5 00 7 00 9 10

**CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS** PG  
No passes. Fri-Sun 1 20 4 00 6 40 9 00  
Mon-Thu 4 00 6 40 9 00

**FINDING NEVERLAND** G  
No passes. Fri-Sun 1 30 4 30 7 20 9 40  
Mon-Thu 4 30 7 20 9 40

**SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON**  
1525-99 St. 436-8585

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
No passes. Daily 12 00 1 00 2 00 3 00 4 00 5 00 5 45  
7 00 8 00 8 30 9 30 10 30

**RAY** PG  
Substance abuse, not recommended for young children. Daily 12 10 3 20 6 40 9 50

**SAW** R  
Disturbing content. Daily 10 45

**SHALL WE DANCE?** PG  
Daily 1 45 4 20 6 45 9 15

**NAPOLEON DYNAMITE** G  
Daily 7 40 9 55

**THE GRUDGE** 14A  
Frightening scenes. Fri-Sun Tue Thu 12 40 3 10 5 30  
7 45 10 20 Mon Wed 12 40 3 10 10 20

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
No passes. Daily 12 15 1 15 2 45 3 45 5 15 6 30 8 40

**AFTER THE SUNSET** 14A  
Daily 1 40 4 40 7 15 10 10

**BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON** 14A  
Coarse language. Daily 12 20 1 20 2 50 4 10 5 20 7 10 8 10 9 40 10 40

**CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS** PG  
No passes. Fri-Mon Wed Thu 12 30 1 30 3 15 4 15  
6 30 7 30 9 00 10 00 Tue 1 30 3 15 4 15 6 30 7 30  
9 00 10 00

**NATIONAL TREASURE** PG  
THX Daily 12 50 1 50 3 50 4 50 6 50 7 50 9 45 10 45

**SIDEWAYS** 18A  
Sexual content. Daily 1 10 4 30 7 20 10 15

**GALAXY CINEMAS @ SHERWOOD PARK**  
1000-107 Ave. 433-0728

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
Fri-Sun 12 30 1 20 3 20 4 10 6 30 7 10 9 45  
Sat Sun 12 30 1 20 3 20 4 10 6 30 7 10 9 45

**RAY** PG  
Substance abuse, not recommended for young children. Daily 9 10

**THE GRUDGE** 14A  
Frightening scenes. Fri-Sun 4 00 9 30 Mon-Thu 9 30

**AFTER THE SUNSET** 14A  
Fri Mon-Thu 7 15 Sat Sun 1 40 7 1

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
No passes. Fri 3 10 7 00 9 20  
Sat Sun 12 40 3 10 7 00 9 20  
Mon-Thu 7 00 9 20

**ALEXANDER** 14A  
Gory scenes. No passes. Fri 3 50 8 00  
Sat-Sun 12 15 3 50 8 00 Mon-Thu 8 00

**BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON** 14A  
Coarse language. Fri 4 40 7 30 10 10 Sat-Sun 1 30  
4 40 7 30 10 10 Mon-Thu 7 30 10 10

**NATIONAL TREASURE** PG  
Fri 3 40 6 45 9 40  
Sat Sun 12 50 3 40 6 45 9 40 Mon-Thu 6 45 9 40

**THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE** G  
Fri 4 20 6 50 9 00  
Sat Sun 12 00 2 15 4 20 6 50 9 00 Mon-Thu 6 50 9 00

**CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS** PG  
No passes. Fri 3 30 7 20 10 00  
Sat Sun 1 00 3 30 7 20 10 00 Mon-Thu 7 20 10 00

**FINDING NEVERLAND** G  
No passes. Fri 4 30 7 40 9 50  
Sat Sun 1 10 4 30 7 40 9 50 Mon-Thu 7 40 9 50

**NORTH EDMONTON CINEMAS**  
14231-137 Ave. 732-2230

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
Daily 12 40 1 40 3 30 4 40 6 55 7 35 9 40 10 15

**RAY** PG  
Substance abuse, not recommended for young children. Daily 12 10 3 20 6 40 9 50

**SAW** R  
Disturbing content. Daily 10 25

**SHALL WE DANCE?** PG  
Daily 1 50 4 30 7 20 9 45

**THE GRUDGE** 14A  
Frightening scenes. Daily 7 50 10 00

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
No passes. Daily 12 15 1 10 3 40 6 50 9 10

**AFTER THE SUNSET** 14A  
Daily 2 00 5 00 7 30 9 55

**BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON** 14A  
Coarse language. Daily 1 20 4 00 6 45 9 20

**FINDING NEVERLAND** G  
No passes. Daily 12 30 2 50 5 10 7 40 10 00

**NATIONAL TREASURE** PG  
Daily 12 50 3 50 7 15 10 10

**THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE** G  
Daily 12 00 2 15 4 20 6 30 8 30

**CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS** PG  
No passes. Fri-Mon Wed-Thu 12 20 1 30 3 00 4 10  
5 20 7 10 9 30 Tue 12 20 3 00 4 10 5 20 7 10 9 30  
Star and Strollers Screening. No passes. Tue 1 00

**WEEKENDER** 14A  
Gory scenes. No passes. Daily 1 00 2 45 4 50 7 00 9 00

**FAMOUS PLAYERS**

**GATEWAY 8**  
2950 Calgary Trail, 436-6977

**LADDER 49** PG  
Coarse language. Fri-Sat Sun 1 00 3 30 6 50 9 45  
Mon-Tue Wed-Thu 6 50 9 45

**TEAM AMERICA: WORLD POLICE** 18A  
Crude sexual language, not recommended for children. Fri-Sat Sun 1 20 4 15 7 15  
Mon-Tue Wed-Thu 7 15

**ALFIE** 14A  
9 30

**BEING JULIA** 14A  
Sexual content. 11 55

**THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE** G  
Fri-Sat Sun 12 20 1 30 2 30 4 00 4 45 7 00 7 30 9 50  
Mon-Tue Wed-Thu 7 00 7 30 9 50

**ALEXANDER** 14A  
Gory scenes. Fri-Sat Sun 12 00 12 50 3 50 4 30 7 45 8 45  
Mon-Tue Wed-Thu 7 45 8 45

**FINDING NEVERLAND** G  
Fri-Sat Sun 1 15 3 45 7 10 9 40  
Mon-Tue Wed-Thu 7 10 9 40

**SILVERCITY WEST EDMONTON MALL**  
WEM, 888-2170 61, 444-2400

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
12 10 1 05 3 30 4 00 6 30 7 05 9 20 9 50

**RAY** PG  
Substance abuse, not recommended for young children. 1 15

**THE GRUDGE** 14A  
Frightening scenes. 1 40 4 10 6 50 9 10

**LADDER 49** PG  
Coarse language. 6 50 9 25

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
12 00 1 15 2 20 4 15 4 45 6 20 7 15 9 40

**AFTER THE SUNSET** 14A  
1 20 3 50 8 25 10 30

**BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON** 14A  
Coarse language. 1 10 3 45 7 25 10 15

**THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE** G  
12 05 12 55 2 15 3 00 4 40 5 15 6 55 7 30 9 55

**NATIONAL TREASURE** PG  
12 15 3 20 6 45 10 00

**ALEXANDER** 14A  
Gory scenes. Fri-Sat 11 45 3 10 7 00 10 30  
Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu 12 10 4 00 8 00

**CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS** PG  
12 45 3 15 7 00 9 35

**FINDING NEVERLAND** G  
1 00 4 30 7 10 9 45  
Famous Builders Wed 1pm

**WESTMOUNT CENTRE**  
111 Ave. Great Rd. 455-0720

**THE INCREDIBLES** G  
Fri-Sat Sun 1 00 4 00 7 00 9 30  
Mon-Tue Wed-Thu 7 00 9 30

**THE POLAR EXPRESS** G  
No passes. Fri-Sat Sun 12 45pm

**THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS MOVIE** G  
Fri-Sat Sun 12 15 2 30 4 45 7 10 9 20  
Mon-Tue Wed-Thu 7 10 9 20

**NATIONAL TREASURE** PG  
Fri-Sat Sun 12 30 3 45 6 45 9 40  
Mon-Tue Wed-Thu 6 45 9 40

**ALEXANDER** 14A  
Gory scenes. Fri-Sat Sun 3 30 7 30

**SPIDER-MAN 2** PG  
Violence, suggestive scenes, unsuitable for young children. 1 15 7 20 9 50  
Fri-Sat late night 1

**MOVIES 12**  
130 AVE. SOUTH STREET 472-9779  
**CINEMA CITY 12**  
1611 99 STREET 463-5481  
SHOWING AT BOTH CINEMAS

**BIRTH** 14A  
Mature themes. Sat Sun 11 15  
Daily 2 00 4 50 7 35 10 05  
Fri-Sat late show 12 15

**SHAUN OF THE DEAD** 18A  
Gory scenes. Sat Sun 11 40  
Daily 1 30 4 55 7 40 10 10  
Fri-Sat late show 12 20

**SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW** PG  
Sat Sun 11 05  
Daily 1 25 4 05 7 00 9 30  
Fri-Sat late show 11 50

**SURVIVING CHRISTMAS** PG  
Not recommended for young children. Sat Sun 11 15  
Daily 1 20 4 20 7 15 9 40  
Fri-Sat late show 11 45

**TAXI** PG  
Violence. Sat Sun 11 20  
Daily 2 15 4 45 7 15 9 45  
Fri-Sat late show 12 00

**THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2: ROYAL ENGAGEMENT** G  
Sat Sun 11 25  
Daily 1 55 4 25 6 55 9 2  
Fri-Sat late show 11 55

**WITHOUT A PADDLE** 14A  
at Sun 11 4



# Kook and Courtney

Dig! tells the riveting tale of the Dandy Warhols and their self-destructive rivals

BY WHITEY HOUSTON

**W**ow! Yikes! As I walked out of Ondi Timoner's unflinching rockumentary *Dig!* I was left with a nagging sense of remorse and perplexed sadness. Y'see, I was sort of expecting a sunshine-up-the-ass hyperbolization of so-called musical genius Anton Newcombe, his band the Brian Jonestown Massacre and their friends and rivals the Dandy Warhols. And the first half-hour doesn't disappoint in this regard, which comes complete with the obligatory montage of industry sycophants spewing volumes of ego-inflating hot air from their collective wordholes, bandying around terms like "rock 'n' roll revolutionary" and "mad musical genius" and at one point even comparing Newcombe to both Jesus and Charles Manson.

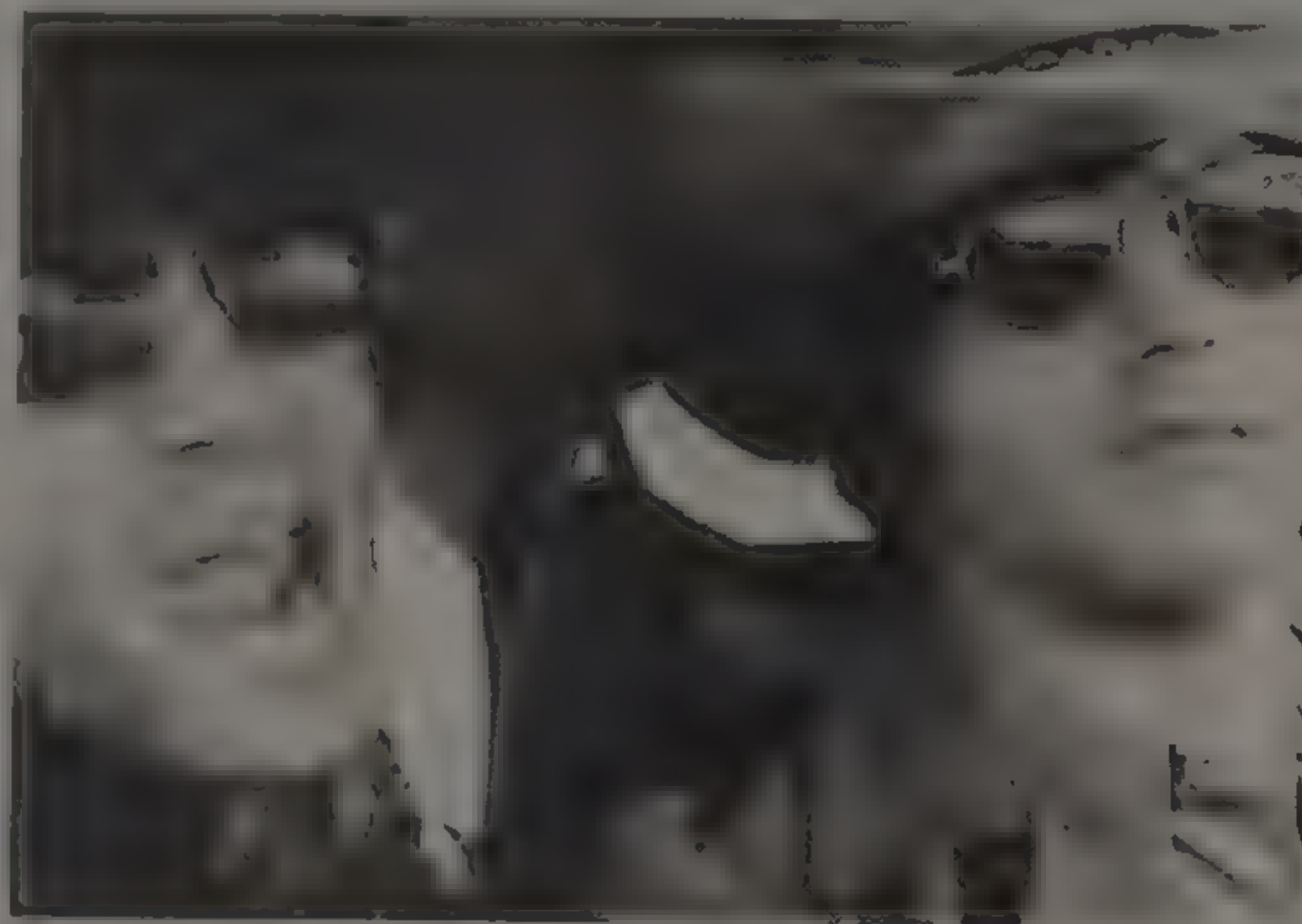
But as it turns out, this is a necessary device, since the entire movie relies on the notion that Newcombe really is a troubled genius and not just some starry eyed junkie who can't pull his shit together. Talk about suspension of disbelief! While it's not at all evident in the film (largely due to Timoner's sensationalistic editing), BJM were an interesting and talented band. If you're familiar with either BJM or the Dandys' repertoire or just an avid audiophile, you will no doubt get emotionally sucked into the vacuum of New-

combe's personal implosion. The uninformed viewer, however, may very well walk out saying, "Who are these jagoffs and why should I care?" or "That dude needs a tuner!"

But hopefully they'll keep watching, because it's here that the dark heart of Timoner's film is exposed, as we watch Newcombe and Dandys

**REVUE ROCKUMENTARY**

frontman Courtney Taylor travel down wildly divergent career paths. We especially get to witness BJM in all their auto-destructive glory: fighting with the audience, fighting amongst themselves, recklessly using drugs and fighting amongst themselves some more. Just when you think these guys couldn't possibly get any more dysfunctional, New-



combe raises the outrage bar a few notches, and Timoner's camera is always inches behind him.

**THE DANDYS**, on the other hand, may be a much more pedestrian band, but their sensible professionalism is a welcome relief from the BJM's spiraling insanity. And in fact,

from major-label bureaucracy to high-dollar video boondoggles, the Dandys' plight is quite compelling in its own right, nicely demonstrating the hoops a lower-level band must jump through to achieve success in the Business. And just when you're getting tired of Taylor crying because his eyeliner isn't right, here comes Newcombe again, hell-bent on royally fucking shit up, rollerskating around New York in a unitard and fur hat.

Luckily it's not all sensationalism: several scenes allow you to see through Newcombe's thinly veiled jealousy over the Dandys' commercial success while Taylor and company are in turn palpably dismayed by their former friends' erratic attacks. After sending the Dandys a CAR! package complete with member-labelled shotgun shells, Newcombe

rocks back and forth in a daze, saying, "When am I going to talk to Courtney again? He probably hates us!" It's a shockingly personal moment and only one of many totally riveting scenes Timoner was able to capture. Indeed, even in the increasingly cramped rock doc genre, *Dig!* has plenty of uncomfortable insights to offer. Darker than a French girl's armpit and Altamont combined, this is a well-crafted film and a must-see for music fans and musicians alike. **✓**

*Directed by Ondi Timoner • Featuring the Dandy Warhols and the Brian Jonestown Massacre • Zeidler Hall, The Citadel • Fri-Mon, Nov 26-29 (9pm) • Metro Cinema • 425-9212*

# I got the hiccup

There's no dialogue but lots of hiccups in free-associative *Huckle*

BY JOSEF BRAUN

**A**spiraling snake gives way to a spinning bicycle wheel; a pair of rolling bocce balls lead to a close-up of a pig's dangling testicles; unsavory liquids pour from pots and ponytailed policemen pee aside country roads. The inspired spirit of free association at work in youthful Hungarian writer/director György Pálfi's *Huckle* is as inventive as it is frequently childish and scatological, but beneath all of its surface pleasures, its gags, surprises and oddities, there lies a deceptive wisdom—not to mention something of a murder mystery (though you might need to see the film twice to actually catch it).

*Huckle* was the 29-year-old Pálfi's thesis project and clearly a very low-budget affair. But far from suffering from such constraints, Pálfi thrives on the medium's essentials, using carefully cultivated montages that evoke the earthy richness of Hungarian village life, pastoral and domestic images that, with the exception of the film's remarkable subterranean and underwater sequences, were presumably easily accessible to Pálfi and his crew. Pálfi has a gift for finding wonder, humour and terror in simplicity, banality and everyday Darwinian struggle. (Eating is a recurring activity in *Huckle*, and Pálfi portrays it in its full, disgusting brutality.) He does a lot with a little because he finds such unique, cinematic ways to weave together the many fragments he's gathered. It makes for an impressive exercise in aesthetic reduction; in particular, Pálfi eliminates virtually all dialogue and focuses instead on heightened sounds, usually the sounds of the menagerie of animals—cats, dogs, geese, moles, horses, bees, frogs, fish—that populate *Huckle* alongside its cast of humans.

**THIS MUSICAL TRAIL** of sounds begins with the first of hundreds of hiccups that erupt from an gnarly old guy who lounges in front of his little house, where he takes in the passing procession of village life with the same amiable acceptance that he grants to the incessant involuntary contractions of his diaphragm. Appropriately, the film doesn't (as you might presume) take its title from the Hungarian word for hiccup (*csuklás*) but from Pálfi's own onomatopoeic word for the sound of a hiccup. Language and literal meaning are not guiding factors here; instead, flow and play and instinct are what drive the film and give it purpose. As a

result, the film has a curious placelessness, a feeling that what we're watch-

ing could be unfolding in some sleepy village in any number of countries—you get the feeling that the simultaneously familiar and strange sights and sounds in *Huckle* could have emerged from nearly anywhere.

*Huckle's* view of village life is a multifaceted one, with as many sinister undertones as there are displays of interdependence, grace and harmony. But while the film's ongoing succession of unusual visual and sound connections provide us with a sense of community that lies beyond the understanding of the village's inhabitants, it's only available to those of us watching it all through Pálfi's lens. *Huckle* reminds me of Amanda Forbis and Wendy Tilby's celebrated animated short *When the Day Breaks*, which draws similar parallels between individual characters (incidentally, also animals) that they themselves are not aware of. *Huckle*, however, seems morally indifferent to what these labyrinthine interconnections suggest... though the folk song sung at the film's close hints that there are darker notions at work in Pálfi's imagination. **✓**

**HUCKLE**

*Written and directed by György Pálfi • Starring Ferenc Bandi, József Rácz and József Forkas • Zeidler Hall, The Citadel • Sun-Mon, Nov 28-29 (7pm) • Metro Cinema • 425-9212*



heresy!

Every week in *Heresy!*, *Vue Weekly* invites its film writers either to champion a film that everyone else regards as trash, or to trash a film that everyone else regards as art. This week: **Brian Gibson defends Fierce Creatures.**

*Fierce Creatures* is the neglected, if not forgotten, cousin to the madcap 1986 farce *A Fish Called Wanda*, also starring John Cleese, Michael Palin, Kevin Kline and Jamie Lee Curtis. But the 1997 quasi-sequel, directed by Fred Schepisi, has more bite and some bloody funny scenes, along with a savage black-comedy climax.

A dry and droll John Cleese, with his usual verbal sputterings and deft comic timing carries the film as repressed Englishman Rollo Lee. He's the new head of an English zoo, a job assigned to him

after Rod McCain, an Aussie media mogul, buys the zoo and dozens of other properties in a big business deal. Kline, who plays Rod and his son Vince, nearly matches Cleese with his double duty as a Rupert Murdoch-like blustering blowhard and his crass, puerile hordog of a heir.

Rollo's idea for increasing profits is to draw people with violent animals, so the keepers desperately try to show that their animals are fierce. There's a hilarious scene where the keepers fake injuries to make Rollo think that their animals are dangerous. And when Willa Weston (Curtis) and Vince show up to take over the zoo, a number of misunderstandings lead them to think that Rollo is a sex fiend. Then there are Cleese's accidental expressions of his lust for Willa—or as he puts it, a "Freudian slit, slut, slop, slip!"

But beyond the warm ensemble comedy of *Fierce Creatures*, the film is one of the best comedies of the last 10 years because it's a sharp-toothed, barb-tongued satire of corporate policies and practices that's all the more relevant in our mega-commercial, *Apprentice*-aspiring society. It's a rare breed of comedy these days that has actual satirical aims, and *Fierce Creatures* savages its corporate target with farcical frenzy.

Rod McCain is a farting, belching

mega-tycoon who buys up businesses and fires staff members with impunity. Adrian Malone (Palin), the insect expert at the zoo, questions the bottom-line ruthlessness and arbitrary profit goals of McCain's company. Vince, who spits out poisonous corporate jargon (costumes are "theme zoo visitation enhancement facilitators"), plasters the zoo with crass crude sponsorships—a tortoise brought to you by Bruce Springsteen, a tiger wearing an ad for Absolut Vodka, an exhibit sponsored by Saddam Hussein—that are hilarious but cut close to the bone. After all, we live in a city that boasts a mall where the new sea lions in the aquarium and visiting petting zoos are "attractions" blending in with stores, ads and corporate chains.

When Rod is accidentally shot *Fierce Creatures* pounces toward a dark absurd ending as zoo employees run around in animal costumes, Vince chooses money over his confused love for Willa and the whole place is eventually handed over to the zookeepers as a common trust. Within the film's colourful exhibits of character comedy, witty dialogue and comic confusion, *Fierce Creatures* roars that small victories can be won against bloated, bland global capitalism. **✓**



# An Open invitation

Matjash Mrozewski courts a new generation of dance fans with *Break Open Play*

By JOSEF BRAUN

As the second installment in the National Arts Centre's three-year Youth Commission for Dance Series, *Break Open Play* is, in its title alone, an invitation for audiences to approach dance from a fresh perspective, to think outside the confines of what they might normally assume dance has to offer and, most importantly, to reconsider who dance is for. When I spoke with *Break Open Play*'s dancer/choreographer Matjash Mrozewski, he was enthusiastic about the aims of the NAC project but at the same time took pains to say that the work is not exclusively for young audiences, that his desire was to in no way pander to a crowd often cynically regarded as... well, you name it: unsophisticated, vulgar, unable to concentrate, et cetera.

Based in Toronto, Matjash is a graduate of the National Ballet School and has since performed works by such choreographers as William Forsythe, Twyla Tharp, Ohad Naharin, Lar Lubovitch, Frederick Ashton and Glenn Tetley. Still under 30, he's also among the youngest of choreographers to present an evening-length piece hosted by Brian Webb Dance Company. *Break Open Play* marks a significant progression in Matjash's work in terms of depth, scale and exposure. We spoke by phone last week while Matjash was presenting the piece in Vancouver.

**Vue Weekly:** What was your first response to being asked to create a work specifically geared toward young audiences?

**Matjash Mrozewski:** [Laughs.] Oh, I think at first it was more than a bit ambivalent, but that might have been just fear. It certainly presented a

lot of big questions right away, some of which I still don't know if I've answered for myself. It felt different to get a commission where you're having to consider your audience. I think I always do that anyway, but in this case the big question for me was how much am I targeting them with the work and how much is it just about getting them to the theatre. The proposition really made me con-

## PREVIEW DANCE

sider what I do as an artist and who ultimately do I do it for.

**VW:** There was never any sense of having to compromise yourself for accessibility?

**MM:** Obviously, that was one of my initial questions. But if this is about helping to educate and cultivate future audiences, I don't think anyone's served if you dumb it down. Yet I think this is something that often happens—and not only toward young

people. Generally I think our culture is so often about removing content and sugaring things up. Anyway, I hope the work is still accessible to young people but challenging for them too.

**VW:** I've done some performing for teen audiences and I certainly found that while the rewards can be deeply gratifying, the resistance can just be gruelling—demoralizing, even—when you're stuck out there trying to deliver.

**MM:** Well, another thing I asked early on in the project's conception was whether or not we're going to be performing for hostile audiences. As a performer I've done plenty of student matinees and sometimes you feel like it's just an excuse for them to get out of class. But with the youth focus group we had in Ottawa and the outreach work we're doing in Edmonton, it has the potential to be more than that. I feel quite optimistic generally, and always try to keep in mind that every time we do another show, no matter what, some people are gonna get it.

**VW:** What would you characterize as distinctive about *Break Open Play* compared to your other work as choreographer?

**MM:** Oddly enough, it's the piece that I've spent the most time and energy working on, so on some level I feel like for me it's quite a mature work. It's a lot more thoughtful, even though in appearance it's a lot more light-hearted and playful and doesn't go to some of the darker or more violent places I've gone before.

**VW:** What's most important to you in terms of what you want to transmit to a young audience?

**MM:** I think we're trying to encourage them to play, to experiment. There's a very DIY feel to the piece because there's simple materials—a paper backdrop and projectors and rope—and hopefully it shows that you can create something beautiful without necessarily having all the bells and whistles. ☺

### BREAK OPEN PLAY

Choreographed by Matjash Mrozewski • Arts Barns • Fri-Sat, Nov 26-27 (8pm) • 420-1757

# Extension must be praised!

Val Smyth celebrates Department of Extension's 70-year history in *Small Is Big*

By AGNIESZKA MATEJKO

As Val Smyth and I walk into the Extension Centre Gallery to see *Small Is Big*, the show he's just curated, his face beams with pride. That's because he's done something nearly impossible: condense 70 years of history of the Faculty of Extension Fine Arts Program into one little gallery. That's no small feat, especially when you love a program as much as Smyth does. (Smyth has worked for the Department of Extension for 37 years. The last six of those he spent as program director; now in semi-retirement, he continues to do what he loves best: show off the program's art by curating exhibitions.)

"It was difficult to put together [the show], trying to capture 70 years in a small space," he says. "I wanted to make sure I got a good measure of what the program has done over the years." Smyth chose only small works from the Alberta Art Foundation Collection and limited himself to the art of former instructors and students; but he still was forced to leave out hundreds of works. That was the sad part of his task, but as he looks at his final selections, Smyth can't help but smile. This show brings back decades of warm memories of unconventional instructors: students from the hidden back roads of Alberta, and especially the hospitable community that the Fine Arts Department has built.

When we pause in front of a painting by a well-known local artist, for instance, Smyth exclaims, "He used to sleep in the back of the classroom!" As it turns out, this instructor

practically lived and painted in his classroom, so it was only natural that when he gave students a long assignment, he would just take a nap. ("This is indicative of the energy these [instructors] put into their work," explains Smyth good-naturedly.) My favourite story, however, comes when Smyth looks fondly at a painting by the late artist Harry Wohlfarth. "Harry had a project from the provincial government," Smyth says, referring to the roughly 14-foot figure of patched steel that still stands on the west side of the Provincial Museum. "He built that in the basement [of the Department of Extension]." As Wohlfarth completed

the statue and moved it into the hallway, he noticed that the knee was

coming apart. So he took out his torch and started to weld. "It made the statue collapse!" Smyth exclaims. "It fell over across the hallway and into the wall. That caused some damage. Harry was not allowed to weld in the hallway anymore."

Wohlfarth was also a part of a project that changed the creative face of Alberta. Together with Douglas Barry he helped to form the Alberta Community Art Club Association, a collection of art clubs comprised largely of farm women. Instructors from the Department of Extension traveled to these clubs regularly. "When you have tenured academics traveling the province to teach, that's a major commitment," says Smyth with admiration. "Harry put over two million miles on Greyhound teaching community classes." Unfortunately, Wohlfarth never learned to drive. Once the bus dropped him off in the centre of a small town, someone then had to courier him to the class. "He had to go by horse and buckboard in the early days," laughs Smyth. "But that time invested is still paying off today because these clubs are still

SEE PAGE 49

Theatre Network

# Marion Bridge

Daniel MacIvor

"MacIvor plumbs the moving and often funny contradictions of the human heart"

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remind people of Cirque du Soleil, the Quebec performing franchise known around the world for their quirky, creative circus experiments. But Dugan and Ulyatt say *Primordial Blues* differs from the ethereal dabbings of the Cirque in several key respects. "Well, they don't really have a narrative," Dugan begins. "They have concepts. Lots and lots of concepts. And then they hire circus performers to do the tricks, and they hire singers to sing, and they hire dancers to dance, and then use thousands of dollars worth of lighting and costumes to add to it. John and I have to do that all ourselves. We have probably a better lighting designer and musical director than they do, because they don't have Bretta Gerecke or Dave Clarke. But we're doing the storytelling and the circus-performing ourselves."

In putting a show like this together, their greatest challenge is figuring out how to balance a theatrical genre as abstract and airy as circus with the concrete, logical world of science. The obvious question, then, is what is all of this going to look like?

"Well," Dugan explains, "we've got an aerial hoop, a big metal hoop that goes up and down in the air...."

"In theory," interjects Ulyatt.

"It definitely goes around," Dugan laughs.

"Yeah, we know it goes around," Ulyatt agrees. "We have to find out whether we have enough strong people to lift us up and down. We're going to find that out tomorrow."

**PRIMORDIAL BLUES REPRESENTS** quite a change from the more traditional roles that Ulyatt plays in not-suspended-in-the-air theatre productions. (In the Citadel's recent production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, for instance, Ulyatt was barely mobile—instead he spent three hours hobbling around the stage on a crutch as Brick.) Preparing for the rigours of constant climbing, suspension and muscle control takes a different sort of training regimen from those of a typical stage actor. "The big challenge for me," explains Ulyatt, "is that I work at the Citadel, I work at a whole bunch of other theatres throughout the year, so [I'm not able] to spend all of my time working on this throughout the year. So when I get back to working on this stuff, it's a big, steep learning curve to get myself back into shape."

And both Ulyatt and Dugan are confident that people will understand the show, once all the pieces come together. "Our idea for the first go-around," Ulyatt says, "was that the story was either about love at first sight or the big bang. So part of what we put together was that, well, love at first sight *could* be the big bang. So it could be the creation of the universe, or it could be the creation of something between two people."

Especially if those two people happen to be dangling precariously from a bolt of suspended fabric. ☐

#### PRIMORDIAL BLUES

Directed by John Paul Fischbach • Written and performed by Annie Dugan and John Ulyatt • La Cité Francophone (8627-91 St) • Nov 25-Dec 5 • 420-1757

## Heroine trade

Wife-husband painting team transforms strong Edmonton women into icons

By MINISTER FAUST

There are the icons of pop music—airbrushed and studio-magicked into the illusion of significance. There are the icons of classical Slavic painting—Biblical figures made into

glowering spectres whose grim gazes intone the imminence of Judgment Day. And then there are the icons created by the wife-and-husband painting team of Izabella Orzelski-Konikowski and Bogdan Koral-Konikowski, whose 12-portrait exhibit *Unsung Heroines* features images of local women, not famous or glamorous, who have quietly toiled for the salvation of others.

One of the most striking pieces in the exhibition depicts a woman whose name Izabella asked me not to include—I'll call her Shana—because her safety is still under threat from an abusive husband. After escaping her homeland, Shana couldn't get her teaching credentials recognized in Alberta, but raised her three boys in Edmonton on the earnings of a two-year child care diploma. If all the paintings were endangered by fire, Izabella says she'd have to save Shana's out of enormous regard for her character. "When I painted it," she says, "I got goosebumps." The painting leaves no question as to Shana's strength—her defiant eyes and Mediterranean appearance suggest the Greek hunter-goddess Diana.

The real Shana, however, is far more humble. Even when pressed, she won't say a word about how being immortalized on canvas makes her feel. But her pride in the Bissell Centre, the poverty-relief agency where she's worked for years, is unmistakable. "It's my second home," she says. "I live there more than at my house. Words cannot describe the way I feel for all these people. I don't call them 'clients.' I call them families, people—Bissell people." Society may forget them, Shana says, but not her.

**ANOTHER STUNNING IMAGE** is that of Charlene Dorval, a recovering alcoholic from small-town Alberta and now an AA crusader. The near-despair in her eyes radiates like cold winter sunlight while the shroud of shadows across the contours of her face form a topography of pain. But most striking of all are the image and story of Angela Hall, a woman of Cree, Metis and Lithuanian

descent, a foster child whose birth family was plagued by addiction. Her flame of a face lights the darkness of her portrait, her mouth set in a near-grimace, a dare—or perhaps grudging self-acceptance.

Hall, now a teacher with Aboriginal Learning Service, declares that working with Aboriginal students is her calling. "It's as natural as doing what you're supposed to be doing in life," she says. "I don't see it as difficult." Such comfort in her vocation means she's uncomfortable with having her portrait on display; she rejects the label of heroine. Accord-

ing to her, she is merely a woman with endurance, an indispensable trait for teaching First Nations students inside the racial strife of Canada. When I ask her to tell me what she sees when she looks at her portrait, she pauses thoughtfully, finally saying "Strength." It takes a long time to have that look in your eyes," she says, before you finally reach the point of peacefulness and acceptance.

**THE KONIKOWSKIS** are perhaps best known for their portrait of Lieutenant-Governor Lois Hole, which hangs in the Stanley Milner Branch of the Edmonton Public Library



Angela Hall

They also have a website, [www.artza.com](http://www.artza.com), but be warned: the internet can't do justice to their work—the vibrancy of their paintings doesn't survive digital translation. Hopefully the book version of the exhibit, to be published by Grassroots Press in January, will be a more vivid record of the exhibit. Either way, *Unsung Heroes* will tour Alberta through March of 2006.

Since both Shana and Angela Hall say they're uncomfortable being made iconic, I ask Izabella whether most men would be so humble if they were rendered the same way. "No," she laughs. "Men are not so modest." ☐

#### UNSUNG HEROINES

By Izabella Orzelski-Konikowski and Bogdan Koral-Konikowski • City Hall • To Nov 30



Annie Dugan and John Ulyatt

## Cirque du Cité

*Primordial Blues* explores love—and the creation of the universe

By IAIN ILICH

In their new show *Primordial Blues*, Edmonton actors Annie Dugan and John Ulyatt have set out to explore the mysteries of love, science and the creation of the universe—while dangling from a series of ropes, several lengths of fabric and a trapeze. "We've taken deep, complex thoughts—about time-stopping, for example, and the beginning of the universe, creation myths," Dugan says. "We are executing these ideas in clown logic, and we're performing them in the air. So, it's a comic aerial romp through the force field of love."

"A force field of love"? "Clown

logic"? What do circus acrobatics have to do with love, let alone the creation of the universe? "Well," Ulyatt laughs, "that's part of the story that's become a bit tenuous right now. Things have changed considerably since we started rehearsing this. In the first workshop production of this show, we had a

#### PREVIEW THEATRE

lot of text and a lot of science, obvious science, mixing in. At this point... Oh God, I don't even want to say this, because it's going to sound ridiculous. At this point, we end up dissecting this force field of love, and what we find inside of it is, you know, one of the building blocks of humanity. So we find DNA inside of this thing." He chuckles. "Oh Christ, it sounds absurd."

That description—self-deprecating as it may be—is bound to

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## Expert Bridge partners

Cairns, Stewart and Livingstone get small moments right in *Marion Bridge*

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

**D**aniel MacIvor's *Marion Bridge* concerns three Cape Breton sisters who find themselves living together in the same house for the first time in years now that their mother is dying of cancer. And that's probably why I made a point of avoiding the film version of the play when it came out last year—the very last thing in the world I ever wanted to see was a movie about three sisters reuniting over their mother's deathbed, especially not a Canadian movie about three sisters reuniting over their mother's deathbed and especially, *especially* not a Canadian movie about three sisters and a dying mother with that overrated twig Molly Parker in the cast.

But as it turns out, *Marion Bridge* isn't actually about the sisters' grief over their mother—that's the story, but it's definitely not the plot. Instead, *Marion Bridge* is all about the interplay between these three women, the way they almost unconsciously get on each other's nerves, the way three women who are as different from one another as it's possible for three women to be can still intuitively understand each other and explain themselves to each other and nobody else simply *because* they're sisters.

It's a play that's all about the quiet accumulation of small, revealing

details, and right from the first scene, MacIvor shows a marvelous eye and ear for the way family members pick at each other's behaviour: when Agnes (Coralie Cairns), who left Cape Breton years ago to pursue an acting career in Toronto, mutters "Whatever" in response to one of her sister Theresa's questions, Theresa (Davina Stewart) immediately snaps back, "Whatever! Don't give me any of your Toronto talk!" Theresa's line is so unexpectedly petty that you can't help but laugh at her, but there's a lifetime of resentment and disapproval and provincialism in it, too. Agnes may think Theresa (who's become a nun) is prim and a little joyless, but Stewart smartly plays her as someone who just thinks

### REVUE THEATRE

she's sensible and sober. I love the way Stewart says, "Most of them are trash," when Agnes suggests renting a video—she's not being moralistic; she just doesn't understand why anyone would want to waste their time on something as frivolous as a Hollywood movie. This is a beautiful, lived-in performance that gets every detail right; Stewart's big scene is a sudden speech late in the play where Theresa tearfully describes how difficult a struggle it is for her to maintain her faith, but for me, it's tiny moments like the way Theresa gives her best outfit a brisk once-over with a clothes brush before she heads out the door to visit a relative for dinner that are what good acting is all about.

**AGNES IS AN ACTOR**, and so it's appropriate that of the three cast mem-

bers, Coralie Cairns is the one who plays to the audience the most—when ever one of her sisters does something particularly strange or annoying, you get the sense she can barely restrain herself from looking out into the audience and asking, "Can you believe these people?" (Agnes is also the only character with a sense of humour, and one of the play's funniest moments is the deadpan look of stupefaction on Agnes's face when her sisters recall a hopelessly lame quip from one of their neighbours and then laugh helplessly as if it were the funniest thing they'd ever heard in their lives.) Cairns effectively conveys the idea that Agnes's worldly airs barely disguise the frustration she feels over having accomplished so little with her life, and so it's quite moving when Agnes decides, however recklessly, to re-enter the life of her estranged daughter Joanie.

Caroline Livingstone plays the youngest sister, Louise, and in some ways she's the trickiest part of the bunch: a withdrawn young woman who seems more engaged in her favourite TV soap opera than in holding down a job or venturing away from the house and making friends. It's easy to picture her as one of those kids who could spend hours watching a caterpillar crawl along a log and never get bored—and who just never grew out of that phase. I was never sure whether Louise is supposed to be a little simple in the head (Agnes keeps trying gently to make Louise realize she's a lesbian, but without much success) or just shy, but Livingstone brings a quiet, unassuming eccentricity to the role that feels just right, and which makes a nice contrast to the more volatile chemistry between Stewart and Cairns.

Dave Clarke's music is lovely, even by his high standards; and while Marissa Kochanski's set may be ugly (what with the peeling wallpaper and the tasteless, mismatched bric-a-brac decorating the walls), it does a beautiful job of evoking a space where generations of McKelgan women have spent most of their days. When the set magically transforms into the beach at Marion Bridge at the end of the play, it's almost a disappointment—not only because the final scene is a little too reminiscent of the ending to *A Guide to Mourning*, but because the kitchen appeared so real and solid and full of memories that it's hard to believe it could be dismantled so easily. Like Agnes, you're surprised at how much you want to go back there. ☺

#### MARION BRIDGE

Directed by Bradley Moss • Written by Daniel MacIvor • Starring Coralie Cairns, Caroline Livingstone and Davina Stewart • The Roxy (10708-124 St) • To Dec 5 • 453-1440

### Small Is Big

Continued from page 47

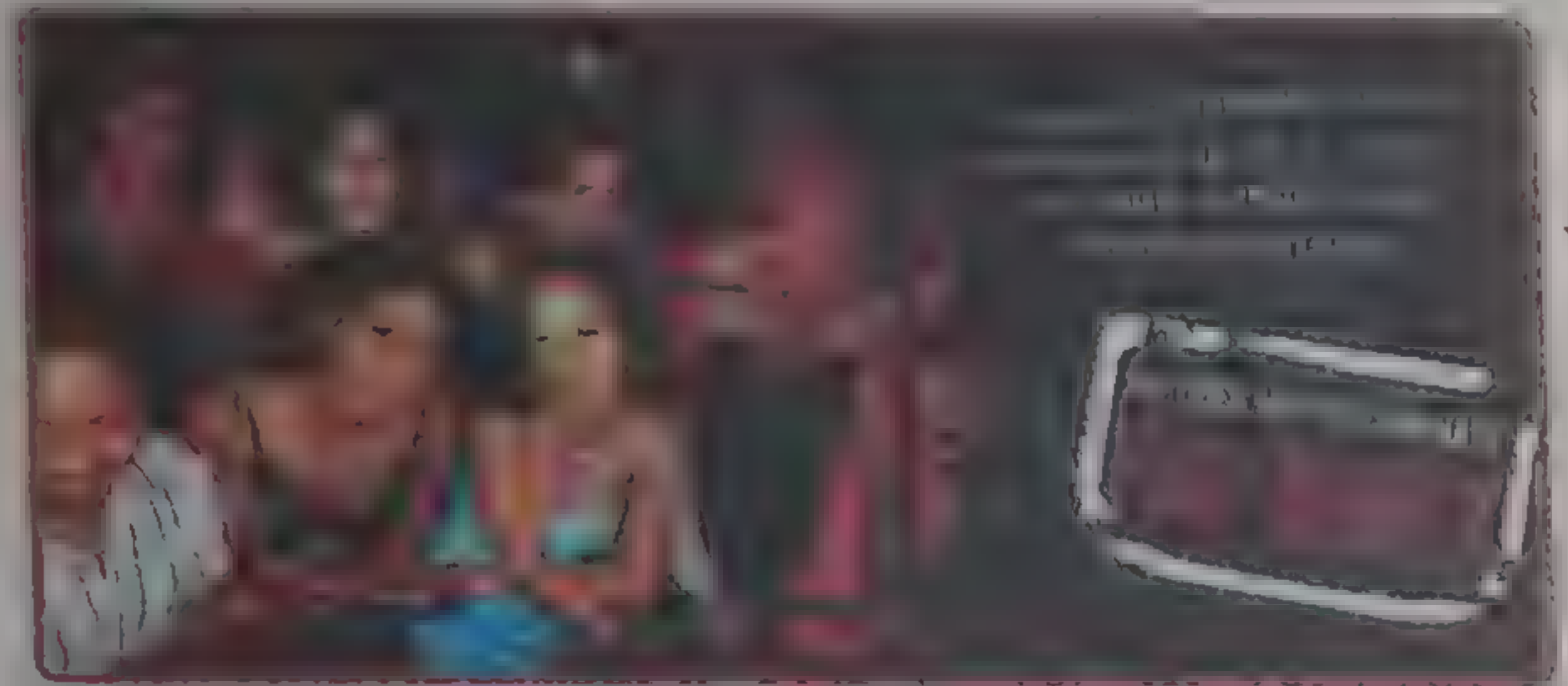
active. We now have a legacy of a province-wide program.

"I have always treated this program more as a community than as a program," he continues. "The sense of community that people feel is what brings them and what keeps them. One student took 74 courses since 1981. That's after the computer

records!" Not only did some of those students forge lifelong friendships in the classroom, but they made a few marriages proposals as well. It's no wonder that Smith can't help but smile as he looks at his exhibition. "This show," he says with delight, "is a celebration of what the program has been able to achieve." ☺

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## AIDS AWARENESS WEEK EVENTS November 24th to December 1st, 2004

### MEMORIAL ROUND DANCE

Saturday, November 27th

Canadian Native Friendship Center

112056 101 Street

Call 488-5742 ext 229 for details

### MEMORIAL TREE ORNAMENT HANGING

Anytime during AIDS Awareness Week

At HIV Edmonton, 105506 102 Street

Call 488-5742 ext 0

### MEMORIAL SERVICE AND VIGIL

Wednesday, December 1st, Time: TBA

Ashbourne Chapel, Garneau United Church,

11148 84 Avenue

call 718-1412 for info

### AIDS LITERATURE IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

7:00 PM, December 1, 2004

World AIDS Day

Diana Davidson, PhD

Stanley Milner Public Library

### TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

5 - 9 pm Saturday, November 20, 2004

Ashbourne Chapel, Garneau United Church,

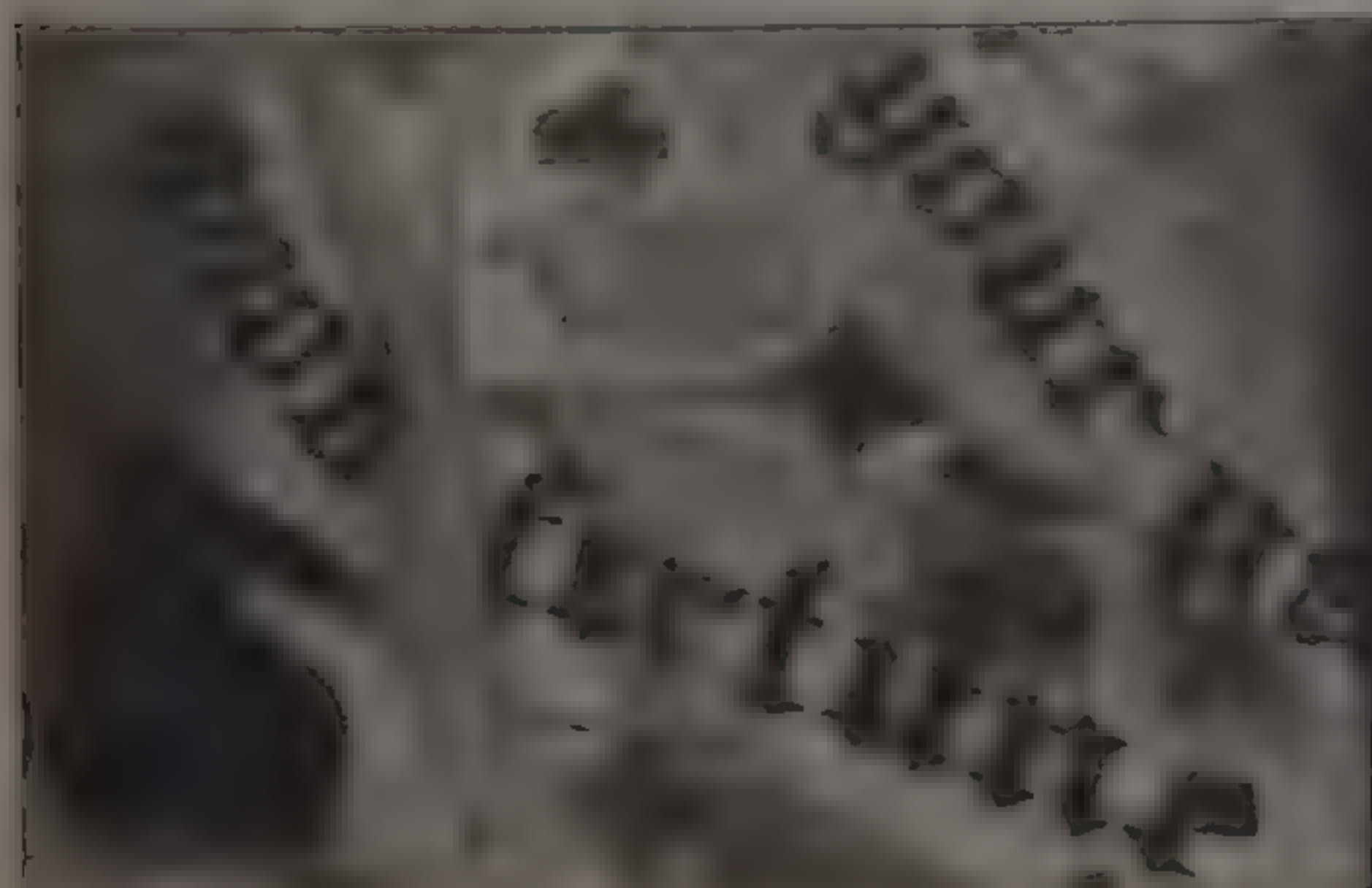
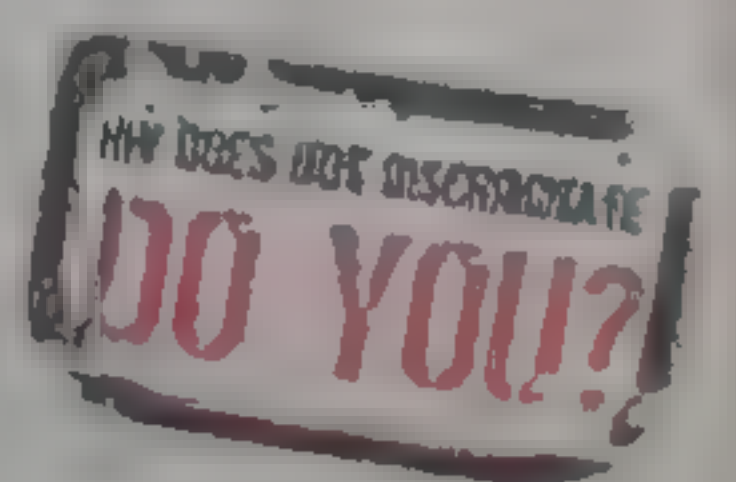
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Nov. 25 - Dec. 18, 2004

Opening Reception Nov. 25 7 - 10 pm

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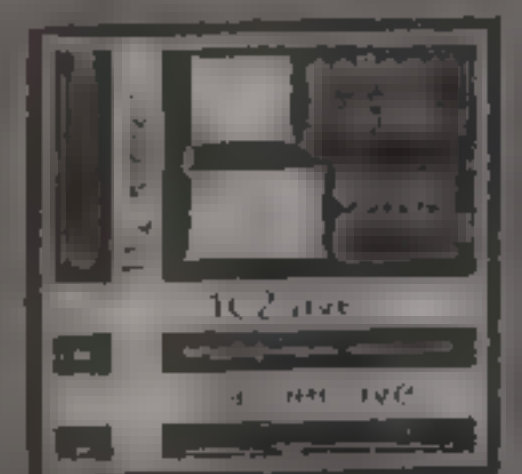


Jenika Sobolewska

Day of the Fool

harcourt@telusplanet.net

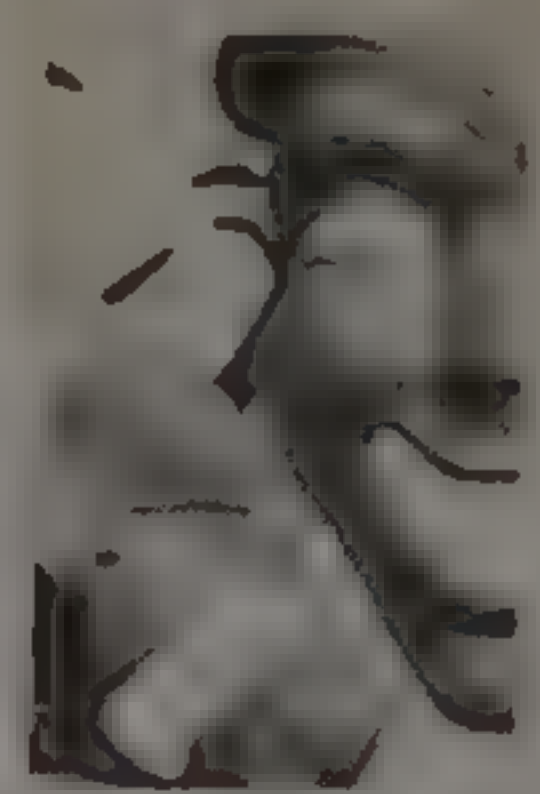
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# ARTS



## theatre notes

By PAUL MATWYCHUK

### Plum exhausted

**The Plum Tree • Catalyst Theatre (8529-103 St) • To Dec 5 • reVUE**  
The set for *The Plum Tree* really does contain a plum tree, and in that plum tree sits Mas Murakami (David Fujino)—or at least his ghost. A willful, nagging old Japanese man who hasn't lost his fondness for cigarettes even after having died of lung cancer, and who blasts away on his trumpet whenever he gets bored, his only mission in life (afterlife?) is alternately to annoy his nephew George (Jared Matsunaga-Turnbull) and to goad him into action.

It's 1989, and George has returned to the farmhouse his family used to own before it was taken away from them in the '40s during the Japanese internment. Buried on the property—somewhere in the shade of Uncle Mas's plum tree, in fact—is a crate of dishes that had been in the Murakami family for generations; George hopes to dig them up, reclaim them for his family and hopefully get

his uncle's nagging ghost off his back. But his plan is complicated when he starts spending more and more time with Frieda Wagner (Linda Huffman), the German woman whose family acquired the Murakamis' farmhouse during the war. The farmhouse is a shambles (Frieda is too old to take care of it properly), but the emotional attachment she feels toward it is arguably even stronger than George's, and as a wary friendship develops between himself and Frieda, George can't help but feel enormous guilt at the idea of removing this lonely woman from her home.

*The Plum Tree* has a strong premise that's full of fascinating moral ambiguities, but you sort of have to keep reminding yourself of that fact as Mitch Miyagawa's slow-paced script meanders to its conclusion. The first half of the play, especially, takes forever to zero in on its point—for some reason, George keeps his true identity a secret from Frieda and instead tells her that he's researching old homes for a local historical society. It's a decision that turns George into a frustratingly passive character—George ought to be the pivotal character in the play, but he spends most of the first act pussyfooting around Frieda, nosing half-heartedly around the plum tree and telling Uncle Mas to stop being such a nag.

Matsunaga-Turnbull is a wonderful actor—he was terrific earlier this season playing a Neil Diamond impersonator and absentee dad in a remount of his Fringe hit *Near Diamond*—but in

*The Plum Tree* he never brings his character into focus. We're told George has been active in Asian causes, especially the fight to have the Canadian government pay redress money to families affected by the Japanese internment, but we don't see much of that anger or that determination on stage. Matsunaga-Turnbull has a very likable stage presence, but maybe it would have been interesting to see the moodier side of his personality come out in this play—if there had been a stronger streak of resentment in George's conversations with Frieda or Uncle Mas, this old guy who won't give him any peace until his 50-year-old score is settled.

Unfortunately, Matsunaga-Turnbull and Fujino don't have much chemistry together. Fujino delivers his lines as if he's talking to himself instead of playing off his co-star, and so you don't get the sense that Mas is this annoying voice inside George's head; he's more like a heckler muttering comments from the balcony.

Huffman has some nice moments, especially late in the play when Frieda realizes her new companion has been lying to her and her open, friendly expression reverts to the mask of suspicion and she wears when George finally knocked on her door. And set designer David Fraser has once again found a way to make a stage play feel like it's taking place outdoors. But *The Plum Tree* still feels airless. It's a worthy subject for a play, but Miyagawa needs to breathe more life into it. **D**

# ARTS WEEKLY

Fax your free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail them to Glenys at [listings@vancouverweekly.com](mailto:listings@vancouverweekly.com).  
Deadline is Friday at 3pm

## DANCE

**BREAK OPEN PLAY** Trans Alta Arts Barns, 10330 84 Ave (420-1757) • Presented by the Brian Webb Dance Company, by choreographer Matjash Mrozewski of the National Ballet of Canada • Nov. 26-27 (8pm) • \$25 (adult)/\$15 (student)/2 tickets for \$12 (High school students in person) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square 420-1757

**FLATSAM** Freemasons Hall, 10318-100 Ave (420-1757) • A collaboration between choreographer/dancer Gerry Morita, musician Izumi Kuniyoshi and video artist Jeremy Rittwage presented by mile zero dance • Dec. 3 (8pm) • \$15/\$12 • Tickets available at TIX on the Square, door

**LAYALI EL SAHARA-DESERT NIGHTS** Provincial Museum of Alberta Auditorium (717-4200) • Middle Eastern dance featuring Nath Keo, Bobby and Robin Hunter • Sun, Nov. 28 (7pm) • \$10 (adv)/\$15 (door)

**MIDNIGHT AT THE OASIS** Myer Horowitz Theatre, U of A Campus (439-6960/451-8000) • Student/teacher recital presented by Isis Dance • Nov. 27 (8pm) • \$20 (door)/\$15 (adv) • Tickets available at Isis Dance 439-6960, TicketMaster 451-8000

**MOTION EMOTION** John L. Haar Theatre, Grant MacEwan Centre for the Arts, 10045-156 St (497-4393) • Dec. 3-4 (8pm) • Tickets available by phone at 497-4393

**THE NUTCRACKER, A BALLET FANTASY** Citadel Theatre, Shector Stage (425-1820) • Ukrainian Shumka Dancers presented by Edmonton's Sulyma Productions featuring the Kyiv Ballet National Opera of Ukraine • Nov. 30-Dec. 19 • Citadel Theatre box office 425-1820

**OURI OURI HIZZI (STAND UP AND DANCE)** Provincial Museum Auditorium, 12849-102 Ave (488-0706) • Middle Eastern dance recital • Sun, Dec. 5 (8pm) • \$10 (adv)/\$15 (door)

**RODA DE CAPOEIRA** The Capoeira Academy, 10540 Jasper Ave (709-3500) • Every Sat (3-4pm) • Free performance of a Brazilian fusion of martial arts, dance, and music, invented by Alcan slaves

## GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

**ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY** 10186-106 St (488-6611/488-5900) • Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm (closed all hols) • **Lower Level Gallery:** IN OUR OWN BACKYARD Featuring works by internationally recognized members of the Alberta Craft Council; until Nov. 27 • **A HOLIDAY CELEBRATION OF CRAFT:** until Dec. 24 • **Discover Gallery:** FIRST FIRE: Christian Barr and Erzen Kufeld's first firings of their 200-cubic foot multidirectional coffin wood-fire kiln, until Nov. 25 • **TWAS THE NIGHT:** Fundraiser; tickets \$20, Nov. 26-27

**ART BEAT GALLERY** 26 St. Anne Street, St. Albert (459-

3679) • Featuring sculptures by Doug Smart, Ed Sousa, Ken Li, Al Henderson, Roy Hinz, Sharon Moore-Foster, and others • Through November

**CHACHKAS** 8118-100 St (432-9444) • Paintings by Paul Roche • Until Dec. 31

**CENTRE D'ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA** 9103-95 Ave (461-3427) • **WOMEN IN ARTS:** Watercolours by Doris Darbasie and Karen Blanchet, mixed media works by Lara Watmough, jewellery by Gisele Wood, artworks by Louise Piquette; until Dec. 10

**COLLECTIVE** 6507-112 Ave (491-0002) • Open: Wed-Fri 12-8, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-4 • Artworks by Brad Burns, Robert Buttery, Janice Hoekstra, and more • Opening reception: Thu, Dec. 2 (4-9pm)

**COMMERCE PLACE** Main Fl, 10150 Jasper Ave (436-3598) • Open Wed-Fri noon-6pm; Sat 11am-4pm • **DAILY PRACTICE:** Pen and ink figurative drawings and charcoal portraits by Richard Toczczak • Dec. 1-18 • Opening reception: Wed, Dec. 1 (5:30-7:30pm)

**DOUGLAS UDELL GALLERY** 10332-124 St (488-4445) • **CHRISTMAS SHOW:** Dec. 4-18 • Opening Reception Dec. 4 • 2-4pm

**EDMONTON ART GALLERY** 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (422-6223) • Open Tue-Wed and Fri 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm; Sat, Sun 11am-5pm. Closed Mon • **FROM NEAR AND FAR:** Artworks that explore Canada as a multicultural society; until May 23 • **FORTY-PART MOTIF:** Installation by Janet Cardiff; until Nov. 28 • **SENSE:** Curated by Cathenne Crowston, features works by Millie Chen, Kanlee Fuglem, Germaine Koh and Claire Savoie; until Nov. 28 • **BETWEEN BORDERS:** Until June 19 • **IMAGES OF EDMONTON:** Until Feb. 20 • **PROTEAN PICASSO:** Drawings and prints from the National Gallery of Canada; until Jan. 16 • **Film and Video Screening:** • **Le Mystere Picasso:** Thu, Nov. 25 (7pm) • **Picasso: Magic, Sex, Death:** Thu, Dec. 2 (7pm) • **Printmaking Resource Centre:** Printworld: Recording Contemporary Life in Print. Demonstrations by local artists who work in print; Thu, Nov. 25 (5-8pm); Sun, Nov. 28 (1-4pm) • Thu, Dec. 2 (5-8pm) • **Kitchen Gallery:** A ROOM WITH A VIEW: Landscape installation by Kristina Kudryk; until Nov. 28 • **Art for Lunch:** Video Wanda Koop: In Her Eyes; Thu, Nov. 25 • **Brine Theatre** (430-1152) Edmonton Student Arts Society Art Benefit Auction; viewing: Dec. 3 (3-7pm); auction: Dec. 4 (3-6pm); free • **Children's Gallery:** SPELLBOUND: until Jan. 2005 • \$8 (adult)/\$6 (student/senior)/\$4 (child 6-12)/free (member/child 5 and under)

**ELECTRUM DESIGN STUDIO** 12419 Stony Plain Rd (482-1402) • Open Tue by appt. only, Wed-Fri 10am-5:30pm, Sat 10am-4pm, closed long weekends • **2004 RETROSPECTIVE YEAR END SHOW:** Featuring artworks by various artists; until Dec. 24 • **Winter Gallery Walk:** Sat, Nov. 27 (10am-5pm); Sun, Nov. 28 (noon-4pm)

**FAB GALLERY** Room 1-1, Fine Arts Building, 112 St, 89 Ave, U of A Campus (492-2081) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 2pm-5pm • **EDMONTON INSPIRES:** A diverse selection of art, artifacts and specimens from the U of A Museums and a series of stories about the museum objects and their connection with Edmonton • Nov. 25-Dec. 18 • Opening reception: Thu, Nov. 25 (7-10pm)

**FORT DOOR** 10308-81 Ave (432-7335) • Open: Mon-

Wed, Sat 10am-6pm, Thu-Fri 10am-9pm, Sun 12-5pm • Eskimo soapstone carvings, seals by Thomas Took, Inuit and Eskimo silver and gold jewellery by D. Dixon • Until Nov. 30

**FRINGE GALLERY** Bsm 10516 Whyte Ave (432-0240) • Open Mon-Sat 9:30am-6pm • **DRAWINGS AS RESEARCH:** Drawings and mixed media artworks by Doug Jamha and Dave Cantine; until Nov. 30 • Staff show; through December

**FRONT GALLERY** 12312 Jasper Ave (488-2952) • **LANDSCAPES:** Oil paintings by Kari Duke; Nov. 25-Dec. 18 • opening reception: Sat, Nov. 27 (2-4pm), artist in attendance

**HARCOURT HOUSE** 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open: Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm • **TALES OF A LUCKY HUSBAND:** Artworks by Holly Newman; Nov. 25-Dec. 18 • opening reception: Nov. 25 (7-10pm) • **DAY OF THE FOOL:** Artworks by Jenika Sobolewska; Nov. 25-Dec. 18; opening reception: Nov. 25 (7-10pm)

**JEFF ALLEN ART GALLERY** Strathcona Place Senior Centre, 10831 University Ave (433-5807) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-4pm • Sculptures and mixed media artworks by Jeff Munan; until Dec. 2 • **CHRISTMAS SHOW:** Group show featuring artworks by various artists; Dec. 8-Jan. 27; open house: Wed, Dec. 8 (6:30-8:30pm)

**JOHNSON GALLERY** 7711-85 St (465-6171) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5:30pm, Sat 9am-5pm • Artworks by Glenda Beaver, Joyce Boyce, Jim Brager, Audrey Pfannmiller and more • Until Nov. 30

**JOHNSON GALLERY** 11817-80 St (479-8424) • Open Mon-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm; Sat 9:30am-4pm • Artworks by Don Sharpe, Dave Ripeley, Wendy Risdale, Al Roberge and others • Until Nov. 30

**LANDO GALLERY** 11130-105 Ave (990-1161) • New works by Roger Colson, John McKee and Brian Scott; until Nov. 30 • **INTRODUCTIONS:** New photographs by Merv Dixon, mixed media works by Teresa Healy, and metal art furniture by Jason Muirhead; Nov. 26-Dec. 11; opening reception: Sat, Nov. 27 (2-4pm)

**LATITUDE 53** 10248-106 St (423-5353) • Open Tue-Fri 10am-6pm, Sat noon-5pm • Group show; until Dec. 15 • **THE FINE ART OF SCHMOOZY:** Featuring art auction, featuring The Strong Bears, DJ Bones and fashion by Nolomi • Dec. 4; \$10 (member)/\$15 (adv)/\$18 (door); tickets available at Latitude, Listen, Nokomis

**MCMULLEN GALLERY** U of A Hospital, 8440-112 St (467-1522) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-8pm; Sat-Sun 1-8pm • **TRANSFORMATIONS:** Featuring audio and visual artworks • Nov. 27-Feb. 6 • Opening reception: Dec. 2 (7-9pm)

**MCPAC MULTICULTURAL PUBLIC ART GALLERY** 541 51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Open 10am-4pm • **IN COMBAT:** Aviation paintings by Robert Bailey; until Nov. 27 • **THE FESTIVE FOREST:** Winter installation; Dec. 7-Jan. 3

**ORTONA GALLERY** 9722-102 St (439-6943) • Sat-Sun noon-5pm, weekdays by appt • **SCAPES:** Collages by Markus Eymann • watercolour landscapes by Wendy FreeOne • Until Nov. 28

**PICTURE THIS GALLERY** 959 Ordre Rd, Gateway to Sherwood Park, Wye Rd (467-3038) • Featuring metal sculpture by Rogelio Menz, florals by Pam Vilcsak, landscapes by Roger Arndt, seascapes by John Ennersen and Brent Heigham, soapstone carvings by Vance Thwaiter • Through December

**PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY** 19 Perron Street, St

SEE NEXT PAGE









# free will astrology

By ROB BREZSNY

## ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 18

Sometimes it's just not worth trying to gnaw through the leather straps; you're better off accepting your bondage, saving your energy and escaping into daydreams. But in the coming weeks, Aries, you should definitely strive to chomp through the leather straps. In fact, you're likely to have excellent results whenever you do anything to wriggle out of your "mind-forg'd manacles," slip away from your volunteer slavery or break free from your self-imposed incarceration. When you look back on your life from the perspective of next year, you will probably call December your Month of Liberation.

## TAURUS Apr 20 - May 20

The basic difference between an ordinary person and a warrior," wrote Carlos Castaneda, "is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge while an ordinary person takes everything either as a blessing or a curse." Maybe you consider yourself an ordinary person, Taurus, and therefore think Castaneda's definition of a warrior has no meaning for you. But I'm here to tell you that the astrological omens say you will have to be a warrior in the coming weeks,

even if you're usually not. So please act as if every experience will have the potential to be an interesting, invigorating challenge.

## GEMINI May 21 - June 20

San Francisco Chronicle critic Mick LaSalle described the movie *Van Helsing* as "what a chimpanzee might do with an Etch-a-Sketch." I suspect that someone in your sphere has recently produced something similar—perhaps a bad work of art, a botched business deal or an awkward relationship. It's not necessarily your sacred duty to try to make this mess more beautiful, and you certainly shouldn't try to prop it up or pretend it's well done. But I do believe you should create something better—much better—to compensate for it. Though almost anything you come up with will look good in comparison, you can't afford to merely act like a smarter chimpanzee with a more deluxe Etch-a-Sketch.

## CANCER June 21 - July 22

Psychologist James Hillman says that taking action to correct social and economic injustice in the world can serve as powerful psychotherapy. In some cases, it may even be a more effective way to transmute one's personal pain than talking endlessly about the pain with a therapist. That thought is the seed of my advice for you, Cancerian. In the coming weeks, the sure cure for your problems—even your most uncomfortable enigma—is to take your mind off yourself and summon all your emotionally rich ingenuity to help others.

## LEO July 23 - Aug 22

In honour of your entrance into the Season of Romance, I've written you a love poem. Here it is. *Be my slow-motion*

*dance. Be my birthday earthquake. Be my ripe pomegranate floating in a blue plastic swimming pool on the first day of winter. Be my handstand on a barstool, my whirlwind week in clown school, my joke shared with a Siberian shaman while shopping for socks at Wal-Mart. Be my puzzle with one piece missing. Be the waves crashing on a beach in the south of France in the 22nd century. Be my golden hammer resting on the moss of a 10-million-year-old rock.*

## VIRGO Aug 23 - Sept 22

In the film *Catch Me If You Can*, a character played by Christopher Walken tells a story that illustrates persistence under duress. "Two little mice fell in a bucket of cream," he begins. "The first mouse gave up and drowned. The second mouse wouldn't quit. He struggled so hard that eventually he churned that cream into butter and crawled out." I urge you to make that second mouse your role model in the coming days, Virgo. Can you summon that much courage, stamina and strength of will? The astrological omens say you can.

## LIBRA Sept 23 - Oct 22

I suggest that you refer to yourself as "we" rather than "I" for the next couple of weeks. There is a power struggle going on among your various sub-personalities, and the best way to keep some of them from going berserk and doing something irrational is to treat them all equally. In fact, I suggest that you give each of them a name. Make each of them feel special. Then sit down with them in a big summit conference. Clear the air. Create an environment that fosters freedom of expression. Listen attentively as each of your many selves describes his or her needs, and try to come up with a plan that satisfies everyone.

## SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21

This is one of those odd turning points when you have a license to be a cute brat in charge of mischievous healing. I dare you to stir up the exact kind of trouble that will make everyone feel better. It's also a good time to start benevolent rumours, break out in song during committee meetings and push your own buttons before anyone else can push them. Please try to be one step ahead of yourself at all times, Scorpio. And if you can't seem to resist your craving for the metaphorical equivalent of pickles and ice cream—and I'll be amazed if you can—be sure you balance it by cultivating a desire for ketchup-and-banana sandwiches.

## SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21

You can't get what you want until you ask for what you want. That's always true, of course. But in the coming days, Sagittarius, it will be even more intensely true than usual. Your life will be a desolate wasteland of frustration if you expect everyone to telepathically guess what you're fantasizing about. But your life will be an overflowing cornucopia of delights if you state concisely, without any whining and without any attitude, precisely what it is you desire. Oh, by the way, here's a corollary to this week's Main Rule: You can't get what you want until you *know* what you want.

## CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 18

With the help of a dead man, Boston Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling achieved success in baseball's post-season playoffs. Shortly before his team's biggest games, Schilling suffered a serious ankle injury. His doctors dreamed up an experimental procedure that involved sewing his skin to the tissue beneath it, thereby creating a temporary

barrier to prevent his weakened tendon from slipping. Since they'd never actually done it, they tried it out first on a cadaver. It worked, and they applied what they'd learned to help Schilling. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, Capricorn, you too will be blessed and aided by the dead in the coming weeks. It may not be as literal as in Schilling's case, but it could be equally dramatic.

## AQUARIUS Jan 19 - Feb 18

There will be times in 2005 when I will ask you to spend quality time wrestling with people who disagree with you; I'll suggest that you expose yourself eagerly to influences that are unfamiliar and even alien. But don't do any of that in the coming weeks, Aquarius. Right now your assignments are to hang around like-minded people, talk shop with cohorts who share your biases and build your community through fun and games. You need to feel you're part of a thriving web that supports you in your drive to live out your dreams—and you need to feel a lot of joy as you do it.

## PISCES Feb 19 - Mar 20

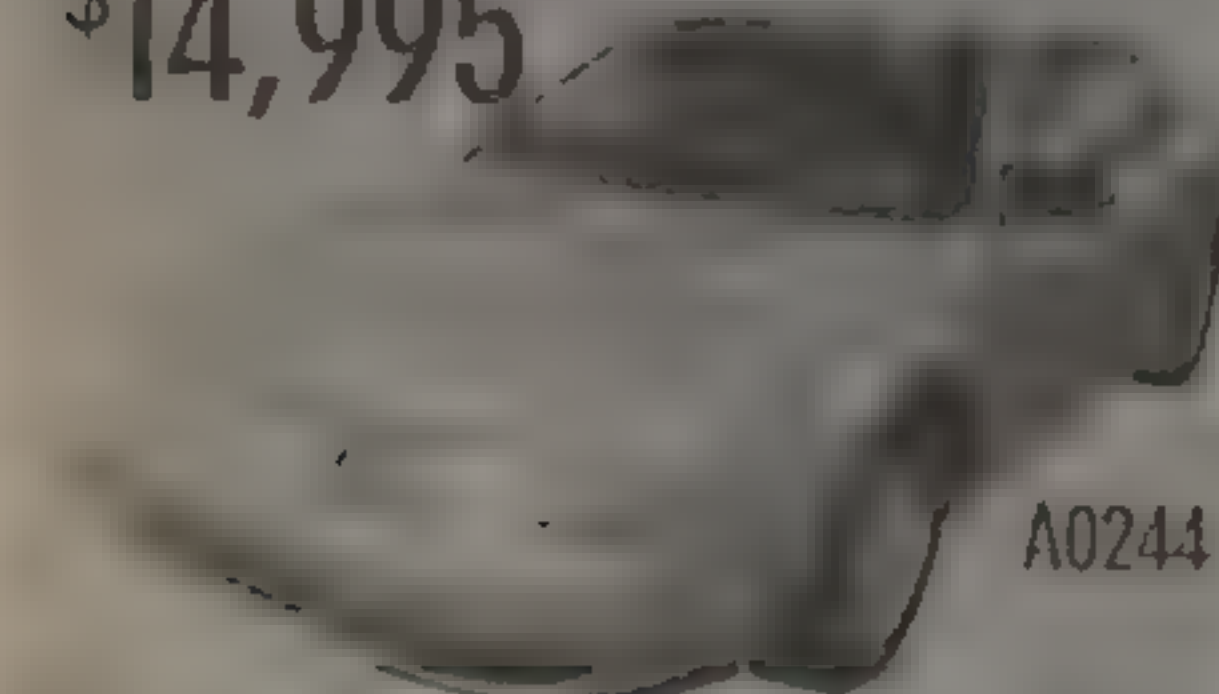
"If you want to build a ship," counseled author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, "don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." That's not only smart advice for a leader who wants to inspire the best in her team members, but also for anyone interested in motivating herself to risk great solo adventures. In fact, that's exactly what you should do in the coming weeks. Pisces, Whisper with wild abandon to your inner child, your inner explorer, your inner magician and your inner monarch. Fill them with the desire to go in search of captivating mysteries that will thrill your heart.

# CLASSIFIEDS

If you want to place your Classified ad in the Weekly please phone Carol at 426-1996. Deadline is noon the Tuesday before publication.

## cars for sale

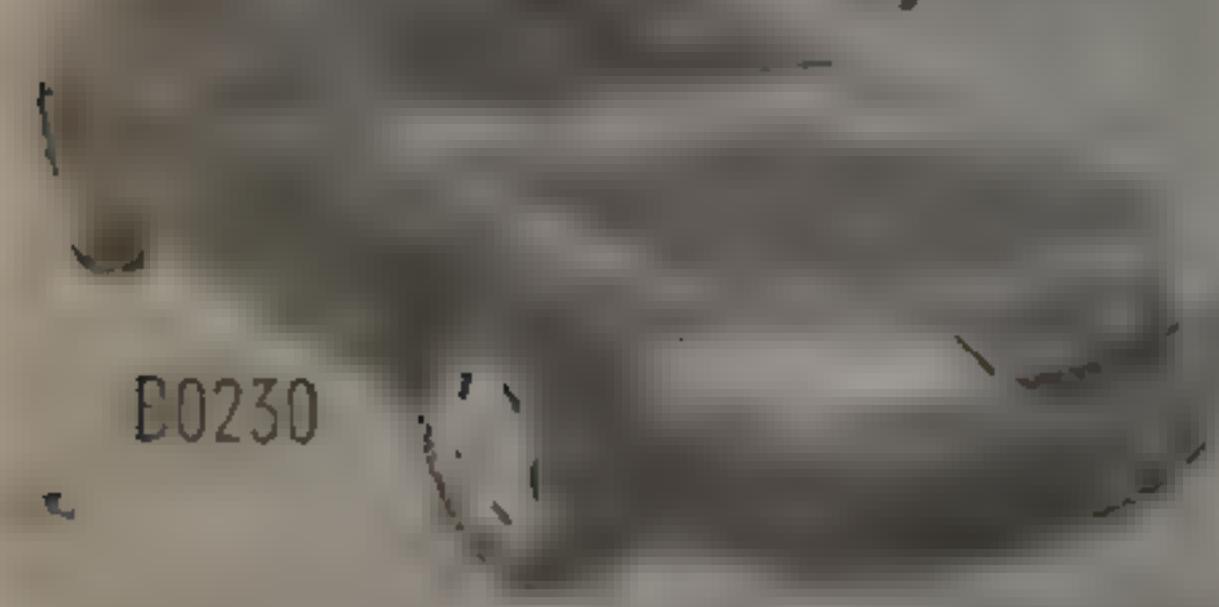
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## artist to artist

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Need a volunteer? Forming an acting troupe? Want someone to jam with? Place up to 20 words FREE, providing the ad is non-profit. Ads of more than 20 words will be subject to regular price or cruel editing. Free ads run for four weeks depending on available space. For more info please phone Glenys at 426-1996/fax 426-2889/e-m office@vue-weekly.com or drop it off at 10303-108 St. Deadline is noon the Tuesday before publication.

Calling for submissions for the Walterdale Theatre Associates Playwrights Workshop. Deadline: Dec. 15. For info or to submit, contact Dale at 433-6525 or [actordale@shaw.ca](mailto:actordale@shaw.ca).

Photographer w/studio seeks local artists/band/musicians for portfolio dev. Free for the rest of 2004 966-FILM [www.davenoe.com](http://www.davenoe.com)

Dancers/Gymnasts meet 1/wk to work with choreographer on new movement involving Dance/Rhythmic Gymnastics. e-m: [contactme123@care2.com](mailto:contactme123@care2.com)

## Audition

The Citadel Theatre  
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Girls and Boys 13-19 yrs old  
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Call Mark at 428-2111 to book or  
[Mharoun@citadeltheatre.com](mailto:Mharoun@citadeltheatre.com)

Sculptors' Association of Alberta: Looking for new members, to network with sculptors, and to learn to sculpt ice. [www.saa.ca](http://www.saa.ca), ph Laurie 232-1886

Screenwriters wanted. Seeking committed, enthusiastic screenwriters for Edmonton screenwriting group. E-m [rditizian@yahoo.ca](mailto:rditizian@yahoo.ca).

SCREENWRITERS circle. First Tues of ea. Month @ 7:30pm. Call 429-1671 or visit FAVA.ca

## musicians

Original project seeking bass player. Rock and roll. Possible touring. Strong commitment required. No students please. Call 893-2347.

Female fronted 3pc requires drummer with big ears, open mind, and soul. Inl. by everything. 444-4670 or e-m: [royor3@hotmail.com](mailto:royor3@hotmail.com)

TEXAS BLOOD MONEY is auditioning for a lead vocalist. Interested? Call 920-0438 or 989-2440.

Exp. F. vocalist seeks musicians to jam Edm. area. Alt. rock, jazz, blues, 80's, etc. U can play it I can sing it. [alternativerockgirl@shaw.ca](mailto:alternativerockgirl@shaw.ca)

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Experienced Cape Breton fiddler available for Jam Sessions, 421-4150.

Est Beatles show seeks a "Paul". Bass/vocals, piano an asset. Must know the material, sing/act the part. 88605377 or [seekingpaul@telus.net](mailto:seekingpaul@telus.net)

Need bassist for original, alt-rock trio, vocals an asset. Willing to play shows. e-m: [music@mon-keyworks.com](mailto:music@mon-keyworks.com) or ph Denis at 483-1134.

Est. Community Big Band has openings: Bari sax, 3rd/4th Tbn, 3rd/4th Tpt, drums, piano, vocals (mf). [actualjazz@hotmail.com](mailto:actualjazz@hotmail.com) 474-3351

## volunteers

Just Christmas 2004. volunteers needed. KAIROS-Edmonton selling Fair Trade Coffee. We need volunteers Fri, Nov. 26, 6:30-9:30pm or Sat, Nov. 27, 9am-5pm. Ph Rosanne 461-2237.

If you are healthy, right-handed and 18-55 years old, call 492-6033 to be in a research study. Expenses paid.

If you OR your brother/sister has schizophrenia, call 492-6033 to be in a research study. Expenses paid.

WANT TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT GE FOOD? On the Last Sat each month volunteers are needed to leaflet at a grocery store. (Meet at noon and finish at 2pm). Sun, Nov. 28. PH Linda 432-5468

Do you like to drive your own car in Edm? We pay the gas! To be appreciated, call Seniors Vol. Driving for more information at 732-1221

Call for Child Volunteers between the ages of 10 to 12 are needed to assess environmental effects from within the study area of Leduc or Parkland Counties. If you and your child are interested in volunteering for this study, please contact our study office at (780) 962-7570.

YEAR ROUND ON-LINE AUCTION for Alberta Easter Seals. <http://auction.edmonton24hours.com>. Donate items, bid, have a great time. Carmen 429-0137 x233.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Edmonton with Edmonton Young Offenders Centre: looking for responsible adult role models/mentors. Must be over 18, have valid drivers license and commit to 1 hr/wk. Ph Siobhain 422-6039 ext. 208 or e-m: [ssupernault@bgce.ca](mailto:ssupernault@bgce.ca)

SEE THEATRE FOR FREE! Workshop West Theatre has a variety of volunteer opportunities throughout the season. 477-5955.

If you have always wanted to be a broadcaster, here is your chance! VoicePrint Canada is looking for volunteers for a new initiative called Local Broadcast Centres. Donate your time to read local newspapers to the thousands of blind, low-vision and seniors in and around Edmonton. Voiceprint Canada broadcasts nationally on CBC Newsworld's S.A.P., and worldwide at [www.voiceprintcanada.com](http://www.voiceprintcanada.com). Audition: call 451-8331, e-m [edmonton@voiceprintcanada.com](mailto:edmonton@voiceprintcanada.com)

Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A seeks individuals suffering from PANIC ATTACKS for research study (Call 407-3221). Reimbursement provided.

HEALTHY VOLUNTEERS required for research studies with the Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A. Call 407-3775 or 407-3221. Reimbursement will be provided.

Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A seeks individuals suffering from SOCIAL PHOBIA for research study (Call 407-3906). Reimbursement provided.

Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A seeks individuals suffering from SEVERE PMS for research study (Ph 407-3775).

FunTeam Alberta, a non-profit sport organization, is currently seeking Volunteers for the Rec Team Program. [www.funteamalberta.com](http://www.funteamalberta.com) Ph Riana 490-0242, e-m [info@funteamalberta.com](mailto:info@funteamalberta.com).

Volunteers need for research at the U of A. Were you suicidal between the ages of 15 and 24, and are under 26? Willing to help us understand the experience of being suicidal and recovering? Participation is strictly confidential. Ph 492-6118 or email [teen.research@ualberta.ca](mailto:teen.research@ualberta.ca)

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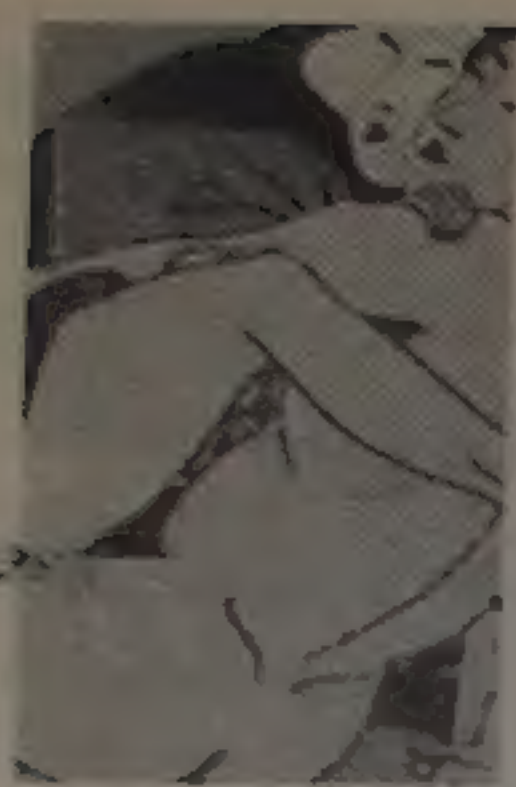
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# alt sex column

By ANDREA NEMERSON

## No problem

Dear Andrea:

My fiancé and I have an extremely active and amazing sex life. It's the best sex of my life and it only gets better and better. I can never get enough of him. After we've had a particularly amazing night, if I even think about it I get shivers all over and can reach orgasm. We've been together for a little over a year and we couldn't be any happier with each other. Is it a bad thing to be so addicted to sex? What's wrong with me?

Love, Too Happy

Dear Happy:

You call that "addicted to sex"? That's no addiction; it's just liking sex a lot, and there's nothing wrong with you. Frankly, I think you're just bragging.

There's been much discussion where I hang out online recently about what constitutes a "First World Problem." Does "I have too much food in the house" count, or must it be something like "The cup holders in my Lexus won't fit a venti latte, so I have to buy two grandes instead"? I'd say "The sex I have with my boyfriend is too good and we're so happy we couldn't be any happier" would certainly count as a First World Problem, except that good sex and good relationships are not the exclusive purview of those lucky enough to live in industrialized democracies. Now quit showing off and go measure your cup holders.

Love, Andrea

## Real problem

Dear Andrea:

I hate my breasts. They are literally deformed (I've done a lot of research) and

have always caused me a lot of self-esteem problems. Although most people would probably say I'm very attractive, I know I am extremely ugly as soon as the top comes off. My boyfriend reassures me, but I can't see how they could actually make him happy. I'm sometimes afraid that he will find someone else with nice, normal breasts. When I catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror, it makes me cry.

I know that this is ridiculous, but I can't stop thinking about it. I'd get surgery but I can't afford it and I'm scared of it. I don't know what to do.

Love, Breast-Obsessed

Dear Obsessed:

"Too Happy" does not have a problem. You have a problem.

I'm confused by your claim to have done a lot of research, unless your research consists of looking at other women's breasts and unfavorably comparing your own to theirs, which is certainly possible. I can't help thinking, though, that your research ought to have turned up the phrase "body dysmorphic disorder" and the fact that BDD

is not uncommon, can be devastating (some sufferers become suicidal) and—this is the important part—is treatable.

I'm not saying for sure that this is what's going on. But just for the heck of it, let's look at the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual's criteria for BDD:

(A) Preoccupation with an imagined defect in appearance. If a slight physical anomaly is present, the person's concern is markedly excessive.

(B) The preoccupation causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

(C) The preoccupation is not better accounted for by another mental disorder (e.g., dissatisfaction with body shape and size in anorexia nervosa).

Does any of this sound even vaguely familiar?

I hear a lot from guys who think their six-inch dicks are so small that no one will ever love them. I hear from women who are utterly freaked out that their labia are a little pendulous or even—horrors!—slightly asymmetrical. I hear from people who produce too little

ejaculate, or too much, or who shoot when they ought to dribble or dribble when they ought to shoot. Most of the time these worriers need nothing but the tiniest nugget of information to normalize the hated part for them and they snap right out of it. We simply don't have enough exposure to other people's bodies these days to know what's normal, and no, porn stars and the well-lit buttocks of the body doubles of Hollywood actresses don't count. Normalization doesn't work for people with BDD, though, any more than "quit washing your hands" is going to do it for people with OCD. (Many clinicians place BDD on the "obsessive compulsive spectrum," by the way.)

If you are firmly convinced that a couple of probably perfectly harmless little body parts are ruining your life, you need more help than I can offer. Now go call some therapists.

Love, Andrea @

Andrea Nemerson writes and teaches in San Francisco. You can e-mail her a question at [andrea@altsexcolumn.com](mailto:andrea@altsexcolumn.com).

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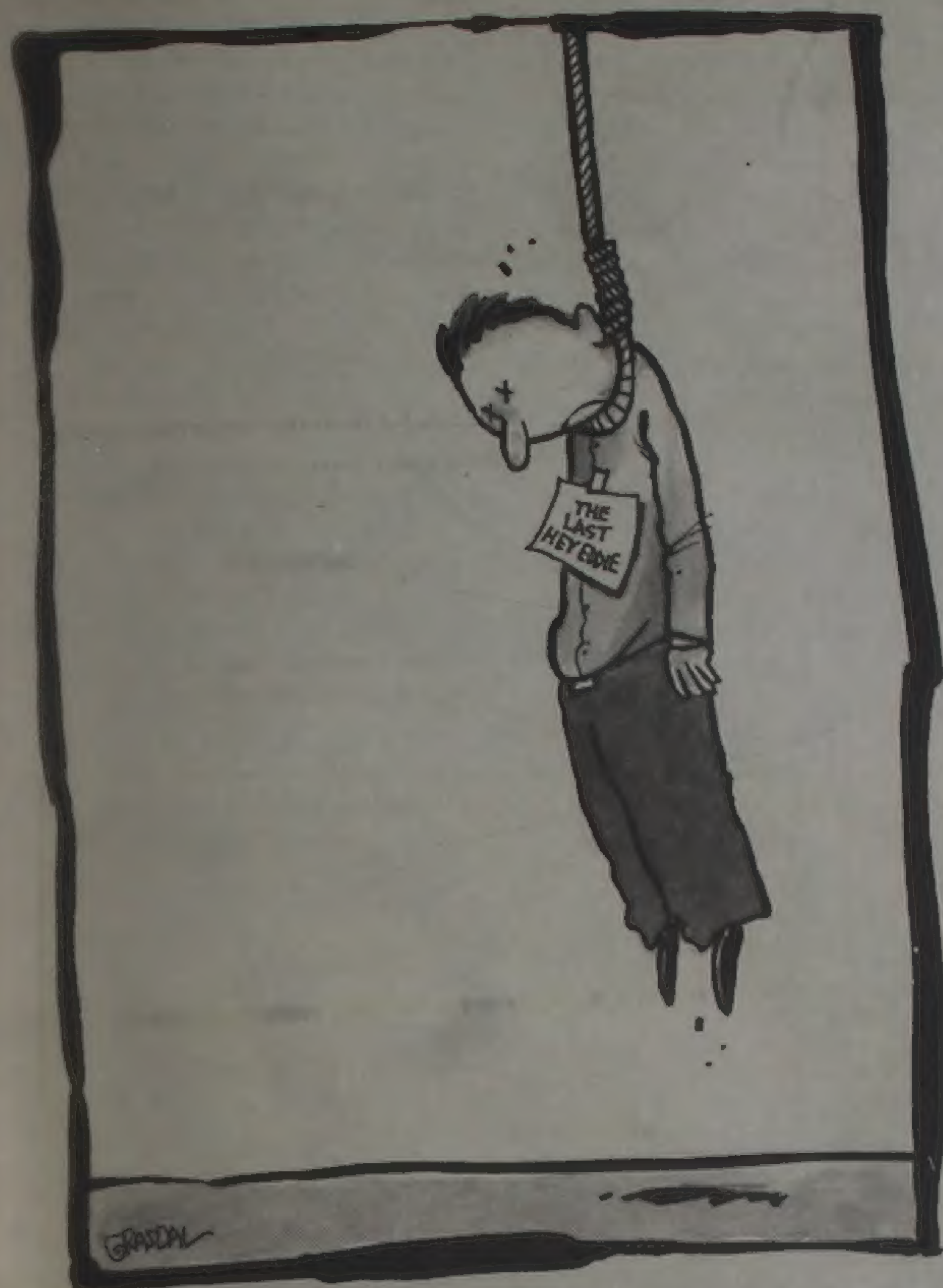
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